HUNTER TRAVEL GUIDES

BUENOS AIRES

and the best of ARGENTINA

ALIVE!

2nd Edition

Arnold Greenberg

VISIT…

BUENOS AIRES
& THE BEST OF
ARGENTINA

Arnold Greenberg

Harriet Greenberg, Editor

HUNTER

HUNTER PUBLISHING, INC.
130 Campus Drive, Edison, NJ 08818
732-225-1900; 800-255-0343; Fax 732-417-1744
hunterp@bellsouth.net

The Boundary, Wheatley Road, Garsington
Oxford, OX44 9EJ England
01865-361122; Fax 01865-361133

ISBN 1-55650-881-6
© 2000 Alive Travel Books, Ltd.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the written permission of the publisher.

This guide focuses on recreational activities. As all such activities contain elements of risk, the publisher, author, affiliated individuals and companies disclaim any responsibility for any injury, harm, or illness that may occur to anyone through, or by use of, the information in this book. Every effort was made to insure the accuracy of information in this book, but the publisher and author do not assume, and hereby disclaim, any liability for any loss or damage caused by errors, omissions, misleading information or potential travel problems caused by this guide, even if such errors or omissions are the result of negligence, accident or any other cause.

Maps by Kim André © 2000 Hunter Publishing, Inc.

1 2 3 4

Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of research or private study, or criticism or review, as permitted under the relevant copyright, designs and patents acts, this publication may only be reproduced, stored or transmitted, in any form or by any means, with the prior permission in writing of the publisher. eBooks Corporation

www.hunterpublishing.com

Hunter's full range of travel guides to all corners of the globe is featured on our exciting web site. You'll find guidebooks to suit every type of traveler, no matter what their budget, lifestyle, or idea of fun. Full descriptions are given for each book, along with reviewers' comments and a cover image. Books may be purchased on-line using a credit card on our secure transaction system.

Alive Guides featured include: *Aruba, Bonaire & Curaçao, Cayman Islands, Cancun & Cozumel, St. Martin & St. Barts, Venezuela* and *Bermuda*.

Check out our *Adventure Guides*, a series aimed at the independent traveler with a focus on outdoor activities (rafting, hiking, biking, skiing, etc.). All books in this signature series cover places to stay and eat, sightseeing, in-town attractions, transportation and more!

Hunter's *Romantic Weekends* series offers myriad things to do for couples of all ages and lifestyles. Quaint places to stay and restaurants where the ambiance will take your breath away are included, along with fun activities that you and your partner will remember forever.

Acknowledgments

With special thanks to Susan Brushaber for all her valuable assistance in this revision.

About the Alive Guides

Reliable, detailed and personally researched by knowledgeable authors, the Alive series was founded by Harriet and Arnold Greenberg.

Arnold has co-authored *South America on $40 A Day*, as well as *Aruba, Bonaire & Curaçao Alive.*

Harriet has co-authored the *Virgin Islands Alive* and *St. Martin & St. Barts Alive* and is currently researching *Puerto Rico Alive*, to be published next year.

This accomplished travel-writing team also operates a renowned bookstore, **The Complete Traveller**, at 199 Madison Avenue in New York City.

We Love to Get Mail

This book has been carefully researched to bring you current, accurate information. But no place is unchanging. We welcome your comments for future editions. Please write us at: Hunter Publishing, 130 Campus Drive, Edison, NJ 08818, or e-mail your comments to kimba@mediasoft.net.

Contents

Introduction 1
- Getting to Argentina 3
  - By Air 3
  - Overland 5
- Health & Safety Tips 7
- Entry Requirements 9
- Climate 9
- Measurements 10
- Packing For Your Trip 11
- Money Matters 11
- The Telephone System 14
- Language 15
- A Capsule History 16
- The Population 31
- The Culture 33
- Religion 44
- Dining 44

Buenos Aires 49
- Upon Arrival 51
- Getting Around Buenos Aires 53
- A Note On Safety 56
- Orientation 59

Best Places to Stay in Buenos Aires 69
- Deluxe Hotels 70
- Expensive Hotels 79
- Moderate Hotels 83
- Inexpensive Hotels 86

Best Places to Eat in Buenos Aires 89
- Confiterías & Sidewalk Cafés 91
- Hotel Dining 93
- Dining in Puerto Madero 94
- Dining in Recoleta 101

The Design Center/Plaza Del Pilar 106
Downtown Dining 109
Barrio Norte "Sud" 117
The Carritos of Costanera Norte 123
Dining in San Telmo 125
Dining in La Boca 129
Dining in the Suburbs 129
Buenos Aires Dawn to Dusk 131
Citywide Pleasures 132
Exploring Downtown 133
Exploring Puerto Madero 145
Exploring Barrio Norte 148
Exploring Buenos Aires' Southern Quarter 160
San Telmo 161
La Boca 175
Palermo 185
The Parks of Buenos Aires 189
Flea Markets 190
Book Fairs 191
Spectator Sports 191
Participant Sports 194
Two Special Attractions Outside the City 196
Buenos Aires Museums 199
Art Galleries 208
Buenos Aires After Dark 211
Entertainment Information 212
Theaters & Concert Halls 212
The Cinema 215
Tango 215
Pubs & Cafés with Live Music 220
Discos 223
A Gay Club 227
The Cantinas of La Boca 228
The Carritos of Costanera Norte 229
For Quieter Types . . . 230
Cabarets 231

For Men Only 231
Shop Till You Drop in Buenos Aires 233
Best Shopping Areas 234
Shopping Centers 235
Once 238
Hotel Shopping Arcades 239
Shopping Tips 239
Best Buys 241
Leathers 241
Leather Shoes & Boots 243
Fur Salons 244
Jewelry 245
Knitwear & Sheepskin 248
Antiques (Antiguedades) & Silver 249
Handicrafts - Regional Gift Shops 251
Argentine Fashions for Women 253
Equestrian Shops 253
Bookstores (Librerías) 254
Antiquarian Bookshops 256
Bonbons 257
Coffee 258
Wines & Liquors 258
Cigars 259
Music 259
Buenos Aires A-Z 261

Around Argentina 265
Travel Within Argentina 267
Bariloche 269
Getting There 270
Climate 271
Arrival 271
Orientation 271
Best Places to Stay in Bariloche 274
Best Places to Eat 282
Dawn to Dusk 289

Sightseeing 294
Crossing to Chile 295
Winter in Bariloche 295
Local Tour Operators 296
Bariloche After Dark 297
Shop Till You Drop 298
Bariloche A-Z 301
Córdoba 305
History 305
Geography/Topography 308
Climate 309
Getting There 310
Arrival 311
Orientation 311
Best Places to Stay in Córdoba 314
Best Places to Eat 322
Dawn To Dusk 331
Córdoba After Dark 356
Discos 357
Bars & Pubs 358
Discos in Carlos Paz 359
A Casino 359
Shop Till You Drop 360
Córdoba A-Z 361
Mendoza 365
History 366
Geography/Topography 371
Climate 373
Getting There 373
Arrival 374
Orientation 374
Best Places to Stay in Mendoza 375
Best Places to Eat 379
Dawn to Dusk 384
Mendoza After Dark 405
Gambling 406

Pubs 406
Discos in Chacras de Coria 407
Shop Till You Drop 407
Mendoza A-Z 411
Iguazú Falls 415
Getting There 417
Best Places to Stay at Iguaçú Falls 418
Best Places to Eat 422
Getting to the Falls 423
Dawn to Dusk 424
Itaipú 425
Iguazú After Dark 427
Shop Till You Drop 427
Iguazú A-Z 428
Mar Del Plata 429
History 431
Climate 433
Getting There 433
Arrival 434
Orientation 434
Best Places to Stay in Mar del Plata 435
Best Places to Eat 441
Confiterias 446
Dawn to Dusk 447
Mar del Plata After Dark 462
A Few of the Better Theaters 463
Gambling 463
Pubs & Discos 464
Shop Till You Drop 465
Mar Del Plata A-Z 466
Ushuaia/Tierra Del Fuego 469
Some Background 470
History 471
Getting There 474
Orientation 476
Climate 478

Best Places to Stay in Ushuaia 479
Best Places to Eat 482
Dawn to Dusk 485
After Dark 488
Chilean Patagonia (Magallanes) 489
Best Places to Stay 489
Best Places to Eat 490
Ushuaia A-Z 490

Outdoor Argentina 493
Skiing 493
National Parks 495
Iguazú National Park 497
Parque Nacional Lanin 499
Nahuel Huapi National Park 501
Perito Moreno National Park 503
Glaciers National Park 504
Valdes Peninsula 506
Tierra Del Fuego National Park 507
National Park Offices 509
Estancias 510
In Buenos Aires Province 511
In Córdoba 513
In Patagonia 513
Hable Español! 515

Index 521

Maps

South America 1
Argentina - Overland Access 6
The Buenos Aires Subway 57
Neighborhoods of Buenos Aires 68
Downtown Buenos Aires 71
La Boca 88

Barrio Norte “Sud” 151
La Recoleta 153
San Telmo 164
San Carlos de Bariloche 272
Downtown Córdoba 312
Mendoza 368
Uguazú 420
Iguazú Falls 421
Downtown Mar del Plata 453
Ushuaia 475

South America

Introduction

Congratulations! If you are reading this introduction you are at least contemplating taking a trip to Argentina. If so, you can look forward to an extraordinary vacation, enjoying both man-made wonders and natural ones. Argentina is not yet a major tourist destination, although the number of visitors from North America has risen dramatically during the last several years. The reasons are obvious. They begin where everything begins in Argentina – Buenos Aires.

One of the world's most wondrous cities, Buenos Aires is more European than Latin American. Open the phonebook and you'll find as many Italian surnames as Spanish ones. You'll also find many British, German, Jewish and Japanese names. Much like the United States, Argentina experienced waves of immigration at the turn of the century and after the Second World War.

It is a city that hardly sleeps, with restaurants routinely serving until 2 or 3 am. There are no obvious slums and, unlike many US cities, the "downtown" areas are not decaying. In fact, they are the heart of the city, home to the best hotels, shops and restaurants. You'll spend much of your time downtown.

Soccer is a national passion; but, thanks to the British, polo is also first rate.

The city has many fine museums and a world-reknowned opera house. Shopping for fine leathers and furs can be fun and rewarding.

You can begin and end your stay in Buenos Aires. But why not see the rest of Argentina? The second largest country in South America, it covers an area of over one million square miles. If you can imagine South America resembling a lamb chop, Argentina and Chile share the bone.

★ Did You Know?

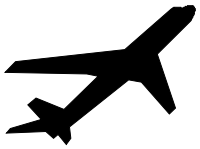
The country is over 2,000 miles long and only 884 miles across at its widest point.

It narrows as it moves southward and its terrain varies dramatically, changing from tropical jungles and rain forests in the north, to majestic Andes peaks that are snowcapped year-round along the spine and an ever-expanding glacier near its southern tip.

Argentina offers a wide range of vacation options that change with the seasons. Of course, since Argentina is in the southern hemisphere, when it's winter in New York, it's summer in Buenos Aires. Avid skiers may want to combine a July 4th visit to Buenos Aires with great skiing near Mendoza or in Bariloche. If you prefer to trek, hunt or fish, you can explore Argentina's national parks in the Argentine summer and swim in Lake Nahuel Huapi on Christmas Eve. Islands inhabited only by penguins and the world's most spectacular water-

fall can also be part of an Argentine vacation. See "Around Argentina" (page 265) for experiences in other parts of this vast country.

Getting to Argentina



By Air

Buenos Aires is readily accessible from the US and Canada, with major carriers flying to the capital city daily. They offer direct flights, usually with one stop en route at Lima, Rio or Miami. Gateway cities include New York, Los Angeles, Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver.

See Buenos Aires A-Z *for a list of the airlines that fly here.*

The Visit Argentina Pass

This is actually a booklet of four flight coupons that must be purchased at the time you buy your ticket to Argentina. Provided you fly to Argentina on Aerolíneas, the cost of the booklet is $420. Otherwise it is $500. Each coupon is good for one flight within Argentina. Up to four additional coupons can be purchased for $110, or $130 if you fly to Argentina on another carrier, and must be purchased at the time you buy your ticket to Argentina. All coupons, are valid for 30 days from the date the first coupon is redeemed. You have to plan carefully since you must state the destinations you intend to use the coupons for at time of purchase (dates are open), and each connecting flight requires an individual coupon.

Domestic carriers are discussed in the Around Argentina *section.*

Aerolíneas Argentinas is the national carrier of Argentina. It enjoys a fine reputation for good service both in the air and on the ground. Its private terminal at Ezeiza International Airport in Buenos Aires, complete with customs facilities, allows you to move through the entrance formalities quickly. Evening flights to Buenos Aires depart from both Miami and New York's John F. Kennedy airport and arrive in Buenos Aires the following morning. There are also morning flights that depart out of Miami on Saturday, Sunday and Wednesday. Aerolíneas offers a host of special tours which you should investigate.

In New York, ☎ 212-698-2050.

In the US, the toll-free number for Aerolíneas Argentinas is ☎ 800-333-0276, with assistance available from 9 am to 9 pm (EST), Monday through Friday, and 10 am to 6:45 pm on weekends.

American Airlines has two daily flights out of Miami and one out of New York's John F. Kennedy airport. All are evening departures. For information and reservations, ☎ 800-433-7300.

Some travelers may welcome breaking up the flight with a short diversion at the Rio airport.

United Airlines offers daily non-stop service to Buenos Aires from Chicago, New York and Miami. All are evening flights. For information and reservations, ☎ 800-241-6522.

Varig Brazilian Airlines, an excellent carrier, flies from New York and Miami to Rio, where you can transfer for the daily flight to Buenos Aires.

For information and reservations, ☎ 800-468-2744.

Canadian Pacific offers daily service to Buenos Aires from Toronto and Vancouver. For information and reservations, ☎ 800-426-7000. Many other Latin American carriers fly from their home base to Buenos Aires. These include **AeroPerú**, **Avianca, LanChile** and **Viasa**. This takes on major importance if Buenos Aires is just one stop on a South America trip.

To get the best fares, you will have to do your homework or have an experienced travel agent do it for you. Deregulation, length of time before departure, your flight route, season and a host of other factors affect fares. Make sure to explore such money-saving options as package tours offered by the airlines, bucket shops, stand-by travel (if your time is flexible), and assorted charter opportunities. The Internet is a great source for last-minute bargains. Three websites worth looking into are **www.airwebtravel.net**, **www. priceline.com** and **www.webflyer.com**.

Overland

Buses, ferries and trains link Argentina with countries nearby – although rarely via Buenos Aires. You can drive or hop a bus from **Chile** (no rail). The busiest crossing goes from Santiago, Chile to Mendoza, although the most exciting is from Puerto Montt through the Chilean and Argentinean lake regions.

See Bariloche*, page 295, for crossings in the Lake Region.*

Overland Routes in Argentina

This route is particularly recommended if you can break your trip. There are bus and rail connections between **Bolivia** and Argentina, and you can hop a bus or ferry in **Paraguay**. The most popular crossing is the one at Iguazú, which is also the favored crossing point from **Brazil**. Keep in mind that you will still be far from Buenos Aires. **Montevideo, Uruguay** and Buenos Aires are just a hydrofoil ride apart.

Health & Safety Tips

No matter where you travel, take some simple precautions in order to avoid health problems, crime and other mishaps. Following are a few suggestions:

* To avoid suspicion when passing through customs, always carry prescription medications in their original containers. Be sure to bring a few extra days worth of medication in case your return home is delayed.
* Research the health risks of the areas you plan to visit and allow yourself time to update or get vaccinations and immunizations as necessary. You should also check on the availability of medical care.
* Try to avoid tap water, ice cubes, local dairy products and raw or uncooked foods if you are traveling in rural areas or cities in lesser developed nations. Drink bottled water.

- Carry a small medical kit with basic emergency supplies, including stomach remedies, band-aids, gauze, antiseptic, and neosporin or something similar for insect bites. If you have any allergies (insect bites, foods, etc.) or health conditions that require a special medication, include it in your medical kit. Check on the accessibility of medical assistance before you leave home.
- Make several copies of your travel itinerary, airline tickets, passport, credit cards and traveler's cheques receipts. Leave a few at home with trusted friends and/or family members and carry copies in one or two separate pieces of your luggage in case the originals are lost or stolen.
- Leave expensive jewelry at home. As a rule of thumb, if any item is of value to you, sentimental or otherwise, leave it home.
- Never display large amounts of money. Instead, divide your cash among your pockets and purse. If you must carry a large amount of cash, keep it in a money belt close to your body and wait until you are in a private location to retrieve it.
- Avoid walking alone at night in an unfamiliar area. Walk confidently (even if you're not) and keep your eyes open.

✻ Tip

If you are a frequent traveler, either for business or pleasure, or you have special medical needs, consider joining **International SOS Assistance, Inc.**, a leading provider of worldwide medical, personal, travel, legal and security assistance services for corporate travelers and expatriates as well as leisure and scholastic travelers. Check out their website at www.Intsos.com.

Entry Requirements

A valid passport is required for US and Canadian citizens to enter Argentina. In addition, you will be issued a tourist card by the airline prior to landing which you must keep in your passport at all times. This is generally true for citizens of other Latin American and European countries. All foreign students who come to Argentina to study should check on entry requirements. No special vaccinations are necessary to enter Argentina.

Climate

Argentina's climate varies by region. Located in the heart of the Pampas along the shores of the Río de la Plata, Buenos Aires enjoys a fairly dry climate. The summer months (December through March) can be very hot and humid, with temperatures in the 80s and 90s.

❊ Tip

School vacations begin at Christmas and continue through January. The city is less crowded then and a few restaurants close.

The Buenos Aires winter is cool but relatively mild, with temperatures in the 40s and 50s. Heavy rainfall occurs during the winter months and, although rare, snow is not unheard of.

The northeastern region, including Iguazú Falls, is semi-tropical and humid all year long. Temperatures are lowest in July and August. Bariloche, a year-round resort destination, has summer temperatures in the high 70s, while winter temperatures are often in the 30s. Patagonia is much colder and rainfall is heavier. Winds, sometimes at gale force, are not uncommon, and weather fluctuates greatly in a 24-hour period. Ushuaia, Tierra del Fuego, is most popular in the summer when the temperature is often in the 50s.

Measurements

Argentina operates on the metric system. To convert kilometers to miles, multiply by .621. To covert meters to feet, multiply by 3.28.

1 Km	*.621 miles*
5 Km	*3.10 miles*
10 Km	*6.20 miles*
15 Km	*9.30 miles*
20 Km	*12.40 miles*

Packing For Your Trip

Depending on the season and regions you will be traveling in, you will need to pack a somewhat varied suitcase. For Buenos Aires and the temperate regions, plan on light, spring-like clothing for the summer months and don't forget your bathing suit. Make sure you have a light jacket or sweater for cool evenings and heavier clothes if you are traveling south. Obviously, if you are planning to visit Bariloche during ski season (May through September), you will need warm winter-wear. The same is true if you plan to stay in Buenos Aires during the winter. Bring a warm sweater or jacket.

While clothing in more rural parts of Argentina tends to be casual (jeans are quite acceptable all over), Buenos Aires residents are quite fashion-conscious and often dress more formally. Dressing up for dinner is an everyday occurrence in the city and is usually required in the nicer restaurants or nightclubs. Men should bring along a jacket and tie, and women should have at least one dressy outfit. Walking shorts are generally acceptable in the capital (but not at dinner).

The dress code relaxes in summer.

Money Matters

Cash

Historically, the Argentine exchange rate fluctuated sharply and suddenly – sometimes overnight – until 1992 when the **new peso** replaced the austral at a rate of 10,000 australes to one

new peso. Additionally, the Argentine peso was pegged to the dollar and, because of that, rates have remained constant ever since.

★ Did You Know?

In 1999, there was even discussion of adopting the dollar as an official currency.

Hence, the exchange rate of the new peso has been holding steady at $1 US to one new peso. However, economic and political thinking changes over time. Just as you should whenever you travel, check the rate immediately prior to your departure.

It may help for you to be aware of the events leading up to the introduction of the new peso. In the 1970s, Buenos Aires was one of Latin America's best buys for the dollar, a budget traveler's dream. A steak dinner at a lovely restaurant could run all of three dollars. With the advent of the "parallel market" in 1974, there was enormous variation between the parallel and the official rate, so costs depended largely on where you purchased your pesos.

Inflation soared out of sight in 1980. A cup of coffee, for example, cost $5 and a cab to the airport from Buenos Aires was over $50. In 1985 the austral replaced the peso as the unit of currency at approximate par with the dollar. Inflation continued to soar and so did the strength of the dollar. Upon his election in 1989, Argentina's president, the Peronist Carlos Menem

enforced strict austerity measures and the Argentine economy began to improve.

Today, prices in Buenos Aires are comparable to those of other major cities around the world, although slightly lower than in New York and Paris.

Dollars and travelers checks can be exchanged at banks and *cambios (*exchange houses) as well as at your hotel. At this writing there is no parallel market and the dollar and peso are accepted equally. By the way, in the years when it did exist, it was not a hush-hush thing. Parallel rates were published in daily newspapers!

Credit Cards

All major international credit cards – American Express, MasterCard, Visa and Diner's Club – are readily accepted at hotels, restaurants, and shops.

*** Tip**

You should have cash and traveler's checks with you because some smaller places may not accept credit cards.

Tipping

A restaurant tip of 10% is customary, plus a 5% bonus for excellent service. Taxies are not tipped.

The Telephone System

To call Argentina from the United States, you must first dial the international operator (011), followed by the country code for Argentina (54) then the city code of the city you are calling and the local number. For the most part, we have listed local phone numbers. Hence if you are calling Argentina from the United States, you must follow the directions above. If you are making a call from one city to another within Argentina, you must first dial 0 and then the city code of the city you are calling. Additionally, a new number has been added in front of the city code depending on the region of the country. Cities north of Buenos Aires now carry a 3 in front of the city code. So you must dial 03 followed by the city code and phone number. When calling Buenos Aires and environs you must now dial (011), and when calling cities and locales south of Buenos Aires you must now dial (02) before the city code and number.

City Codes

Buenos Aires	11
Bariloche	2944
Cordoba	351
Mar del Plata	223
Mendoza	261
Puerto Iguazú	3757
Ushuaia	2901

As of January 1999, a 4 has been added to the beginning of all local phone numbers. This may

or may not be reflected in written materials you find as you research your trip. However, we have added the 4 to the numbers we provide.

For example, 123-4567 is now 4123-4567.

Language

The language of Argentina is Spanish or "Castellaño," as the Argentineans call it. However, they've flavored it with a cadence and intonation all their own. The musicality and variations in pronunciation of the Spanish spoken in Argentina, especially in Buenos Aires, set it apart from all others. Most notable is the pronunciation of the "ll," commonly pronounced "ya" as in "llama" ("yama"). In Argentina, however, the "y" becomes a combination of "z" and "sh" ("zshama").

Lunfardo

In some districts of Buenos Aires you're bound to hear people speaking something which sounds like Spanish but isn't. That language, or actually a dialect, is Lunfardo. As you know, Buenos Aires is a city of immigrants. Lunfardo arose from the need for mutual understanding among the different peoples who came to Argentina to start a new life. It is a recognized dialect; you can even buy a phrase book entitled, *Aprender Lunfardo* (*Learn Lunfardo*).

If you speak Spanish, you'll also pick up on friends calling one another "che," and that the 2nd person "tú" has been replaced by "vos," the

2nd person plural conjugation not used anywhere else in South America. Listen carefully and you'll also note differences in vocabulary. For example, "avocado," which in Spanish is "aguacate," is "palta" in Argentina. "Money," which is "dinero," is referred to here as "yira," while a silly person is not "tonto" but "boludo." "Bárbaro!" is "fantastic!"

A Capsule History

"*Y allí levantamos una ciudad que se llama Buenos Aires* – And here we raised a city called Buenos Aires."

When these words were written in the 16th century, the chronicler must have been quite a visionary. At that time, the "city" had only a few hundred inhabitants. With its new port barred from commerce by its Spanish rulers, the future did not look too bright. But just a century later, Buenos Aires had become a cultural center and the heart of South America's fight for freedom from Spain. The cosmopolitan metropolis of today can be traced back to Indians who inhabited the area for centuries before the first Europeans arrived.

Before the Spanish

Argentina and Chile were the last areas of what is now South America to be inhabited by early humans. The Bering Straits formed a bridge from Asia to America during the Ice Age, providing the first group of Asians with access to the west around 25,000 B.C. The earliest set-

tlers probably reached the southern tip of South America by 9,000 B.C. Cave sites near the Straits of Magellan corroborate this theory. Development throughout the country was uneven, with certain groups remaining as hunters and gatherers until the arrival of the Spanish, and others progressing to advanced agricultural techniques and culture. However, nowhere in Argentina was there a unified and advanced culture like those of the Maya, Aztec or Inca.

The northwest section of what is now Argentina was the most developed because of its proximity to the culturally advanced centers of Bolivia and Peru. Around 1480 A.D. the Inca armies invaded and actually incorporated the area into their vast empire. Here, natives lived in simple stone houses in towns that sometimes reached 3,000 in size. Many of these towns were built on hilltops and were walled in for protection. Agriculture was the main source of livelihood, and irrigation and the domestication of animals, particularly llamas, were practiced widely. Ceramics, wood carvings, large stone sculptures and high quality metal tools, especially of copper and bronze, have all been found in this region.

Remains of Inca roads, storage places and forests can still be found in the area.

The area around the Central Mountains and what is today Santiago del Estero (the province) was far less developed. Hunting and gathering were the main source of food, although some agriculture was practiced. Artifacts found

here were rougher and cruder. Villages, some built partially underground, were smaller.

Santiago del Estero (the city) is the oldest in Argentina.

Life in the northeast was very similar to that in the central region but, because there was access to two large rivers (the Paraná and the Uruguay), fishing became an important part of the economy.

The southernmost region of Argentina, Tierra del Fuego, experienced little cultural development. Few artifacts or examples of architecture have been found. The peoples who lived here were nomadic, moving throughout the area in search of food that could be hunted, fished or gathered.

Cave Drawings

There are beautiful caves throughout the southern regions of Argentina. On their walls, the paintings of these primitive peoples are still visible. The best known of these caves is **La Cueva de las Manos**, just outside the village of Perito Moreno in the province of Santa Cruz in the Lake District.

Archaeologists have identified four different periods or styles in the highly stylized drawings of animals, primarily guanacos and men portrayed as hunters. While much remains a mystery, the caves do provide some insight into the prehistoric peoples who populated the region.

Little or no agriculture was practiced. Pottery, metalworking and other crafts were virtually unknown. On the other hand, tools made of bone and stone were highly developed, reflecting a successful adaptation to the local environment. The lifestyle of these nomads remained the same for 6,000 years until the Spanish introduced agricultural techniques.

Archaeologists are still trying to fill in their knowledge of the cultures and religions of Argentina's earliest inhabitants. Yet, one thing is certain. When the Spanish arrived, they encountered a wide variety of peoples and stages of cultural development.

The Colonial Period

Spurred on by the exploits of Columbus and subsequent adventurer-explorers such as Amerigo Vespucci and Ferdinand Magellan, the Spaniards (under the monarchy of King Philip II) continued to send expeditions to South America.

★ Did You Know?

The city of Buenos Aires was actually founded twice, first by Pedro de Mendoza in 1536, then later and more definitively by Juan de Garay in 1580.

The city did not immediately prosper. It was the southernmost part of the Peruvian Viceroyalty and in 1554 the King of Spain had decreed that all trade from Spain come via Panama and

Peru, then south to Argentina. This effectively cut off any commercial traffic for the fledgling city on the Río de la Plata. For 200 years Buenos Aires remained a small town, peopled primarily by *criollos*, Spaniards born in Argentina and *mestizos*, those of mixed Spanish/Indian descent.

The major industry was smuggling Spanish goods.

It was the northwest part of today's Argentina, along with Córdoba, that experienced the greatest growth due to its proximity to Peru. Wheat, cotton, corn and tobacco were cultivated here for export.

The Jesuits established the university in Córdoba in 1613, making it a cultural center as well.

In 1776 the Spanish decided to open the Río de la Plata for transatlantic trade. They had created the Viceroyalty of Río de la Plata and named Buenos Aires as its administrative center. One immediate effect was a population explosion with 25,000 new inhabitants swelling the city to over 30,000 in just two years. As the city flourished, so did the fertile pampas surrounding it. Here vast *estancias* (ranches) were established and the *gaucho* rode into the country's folklore.

About a third of the new inhabitants were Africans brought here as slaves. Their fate is largely unknown.

Defending Against Europe

Events in Europe began to affect the new Viceroyalty. Spain's navy was virtually destroyed by the British during the Napoleonic wars, leaving the colonies vulnerable to attack. And attack the British did. In 1806, the city was successfully defended by a ragtag army organized by a local hero, **Santiago de Liniers.** The following year, the British sent 8,000 men to

invade the city but were once again, fought off by volunteers, including women and children who, perched on roof tops, doused them with boiling water.

Independence

The successful defense of the city by locals gave impetus to a movement that had been silently growing for several years – independence from Spain. The city's *criollo* leadership was fed up with restrictions on trade that had favored the Spanish and with being forced to play a neglible role in the growth of a nation. As elsewhere in Latin America, large landowners and clergy often brought over from Spain formed the city's power base, effectively preventing the *criollos* from having any real influence.

Emboldened, the *criollos* formed a local council and voted to unseat the Spanish Viceroy. The council formed to rule was composed of Argentina's finest intellectuals, including Bernardino Rivadavia, Manuel Belgrano and Mariano Moreno. They wanted to create a nation based on European ideas of democracy and liberalism. Naturally, the establishment vehemently opposed any changes in the status quo.

Each has an important street named in his honor in downtown Buenos Aires.

On May 25, 1810 the council voted to dissolve the Viceroyalty and form a local government. But the definitive break from Spain did not occur until 1816. Those intervening six years were filled with political anarchy and civil war sparked by the conflicts of interest among the various factions which arose from the dissolu-

tion of the viceroyalty – revolutionary nationalists vs. royalists; *criollos* vs. *peninsulares*; and *unitarios* (supporters of a strong central government in Buenos Aires) vs. *federales* (supporters of a loose confederation of autonomous provinces). Political *juntas* came and went until July 9, 1816 when the Congress of San Miguel de Tucumán declared Argentina's independence from Spain. Two months earlier, Juan Martín de Pueyrredón had been appointed Supreme Dictator of the United Provinces of the Río de la Plata.

Although not a nation at peace with itself, Argentina did take the lead in freeing other parts of the continent from Spanish rule. Led by **General José de San Martín** (*El Libertador* – The Liberator), the Argentine Army crossed the Andes and joined the Chilean army under Bernardo O'Higgins to defeat the Spanish in February 1817; and then braved the 1,500-mile trip to Lima to free Peru in 1822. San Martín also inspired his northern counterpart, the Venezuelan **Simón Bolívar** who helped free Venezuela, Colombia and Ecuador.

After years of continued conflict between the *federales* and the *unitarios*, **Bernardino Rivadavia** was elected the first president of the United Provinces of the Río de la Plata in February,1826 by the constituent congress in Buenos Aires. Rivadavia, with the backing of the unitarians, proposed that Buenos Aires be designated the federal capital of the United Provinces. A Unitarian Constitution was

approved on July 19, 1826. Rivadavia also attempted to establish a land redistribution program. Yet, once again, Buenos Aires and provincial federalists, among them powerful *caudillos* (land owners), opposed reform and Rivadavia's government failed in 1827.

Shortly thereafter in 1829, **Juan Manuel de Rosas** was elected governor of Buenos Aires and remained in that position (except for the period of 1832-1835) until 1852. De Rosas was a fascinating character – just perfect for a Paul Newman flick. Born to a wealthy family, he grew up on an *estancia* and could ride, rope and handle a horse like a *gaucho*. He was also a successful businessman. He seemed to be the strong leader the country needed. De Rosas formed a coalition between the *caudillos* and prosperous merchants and others who supported the federalist cause, and eventually gained almost unlimited authority over Buenos Aires and the country. He led a campaign to wipe out the native Indians of southern Argentina and consolidated the federalists' power by imprisoning and killing all those who opposed him. Under Rosas, horrific methods of death and torture were made official and estimates of the number of dead are in the thousands. Putting all his energies into staying in power, Rosas succeeded in destroying the economy and wasting national funds.

By the late 1840s and early 1850s, an underground movement had begun to plot the overthrow of Rosas. A group of upper class

intellectuals was led by **Bartolomé Mitre, Juan Bautista Alberti** and **Domingo Sarmiento**. Their opportunity came when **Justo José de Urquiza**, a wealthy *caudillo* and former Rosas supporter from Entre Ríos, turned against him in May, 1851. Urquiza raised a volunteer army, which included members of Rosas' own force. Rosas was easily overthrown on February 3, 1852.

Rosas fled to England, where he died 25 years later.

A New Constitution

The next three decades were filled with efforts to organize a unified nation and to create governmental bodies that could formulate and implement policy. On May 25, 1853 a new Constitution closely modeled on that of the United States replaced the Constitution of 1816.

Urquiza was elected the first constitutional president of the Argentine Republic. He built banks, schools, and roads linking Buenos Aires to the outlying provinces. In 1862, Buenos Aires was named the capital of the country. **Bartolomé Mitre**, then governor of Buenos Aires, was elected president. He was succeeded by **Domingo Sarmiento**, whose term (1868-1874) saw Argentina take its place on the world stage. It was Sarmiento who ushered in the "golden age" of Argentina. It would last until World War I.

During this period immigration soared, as did exports to Europe; land was opened up; communications improved; and the nation's economy boomed. Intellectual growth occurred as well,

with the founding of newspapers, political parties, a world-class opera house, and the nation's first five teacher training schools.

Modern Argentina

Although all was well on the surface, political unrest was increasing. More and more people resented being ruled by a government of wealthy landowners. Labor strikes were frequent and, eventually, so were confrontations between opposition groups and the military. In the 1930s, with the onset of the worldwide depression, conditions worsened and the economy ground to a halt. The military stepped in and deposed Hipolito Yrigoyen, then in his second term as president. This was the first of several military interventions in Argentina's modern political life.

Juan Domingo Perón

Military regimes alternated with elected governments. In the coup of 1943 a new figure emerged in Argentina and onto the world stage, Juan Domingo Perón. As a career military officer who had been sent to Italy for training, Perón was an admirer of Benito Mussolini, as were other Argentine officers. Upon his return to Argentina, he joined a secret organization that promoted these facist policies.

In 1943, Perón was appointed Secretary of the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare. It was from this position that he built a strong power base. He enacted a series of child labor laws, job

security and pension reforms that made him the hero of Argentina's working class. On October 9, 1945 Perón was arrested by the army, who feared his growing popularity. This move backfired largely due to the efforts of Eva Duarte, Perón's consort and soon-to-be wife. Eva and Perón's followers organized large-scale demonstrations and protest marches by the working classes. The largest filled the Plaza de Mayo, where the army bombed its own people. Perón was released on October 17 and was elected president in 1946. He was bitterly opposed by the United States, who labeled him a fascist.

In 1944 Juan Perón married his second wife, **Eva Duarte**, a relatively unknown singer/actress, 25 years his junior. Evita was an astute politician and her influence on her husband's political rise was enormous. With her urging, Perón made the working class and labor unionists his power base. The legislation he proposed to benefit them was greeted by their political loyalty and this support carried him to the presidency. During her husband's first term, Evita became the champion of the *descamisados* (shirtless ones, i.e., the workers) and a near-cult figure. The social organization she founded built schools and hospitals and, as a feminist, she even started a women's political party. She was greeted as a celebrity during a tour of European capitals. When she died in 1952 at the age of 33, she left her followers in grief and her hus-

band without his most devoted aide and visible supporter.

Evita's remains were sent to Europe for burial after Perón was overthrown in 1955. However, upon his death in 1974 her body was reinterred in the Recoleta Cemetery. Fresh flowers are placed there daily and the crypt is guarded. Evita's epitaph, immortalized in song, reads, "Don't cry for me Argentina, I remain quite near you."

The Fall & Rise of Perón

Perón, following Mussolini's policy, took control of many industries and projects. The years following World War II were prosperous. National wealth grew and, along with it, workers' wages. Perón was overwhelmingly re-elected in 1951, but a series of droughts hurt the economy and a drop in grain prices ended the prosperity.

Perón began to leave important decisions to his staff and the nation slid ever deeper into a depression. The Peronist government, which had organized Argentina along fascist lines, eventually paralyzed production, discouraged investment and strengthened the armed forces.

★ Did You Know?

The armed forces ultimately rebelled and overthrew Perón in 1955. He fled to Paraguay.

The armed forces returned Argentina to civilian government in 1958, but in the following 18 years there were nine different governments and countless coups. Each government seemed incapable of solving the serious economic problems facing Argentina: inflation was extremely high; the trade deficit was unmanageable; and foreign ownership of Argentine companies had hit a high of nearly 60%. The military exercised a great deal of power during this period. Heavy use of torture and murder was not uncommon.

These repressive conditions created the proper climate for Juan Perón to stage a comeback. Perón ran by proxy in the 1973 elections and won. He made his third wife, María Estela (Isabel) Martínez, vice-president and attempted to undo some of the damage wrought in the previous 20 years. However, his efforts were cut short by his sudden death in mid-1974 and "Isabelita" was left in control. Her government, like most to follow, was marked by corruption, conservatism and an increased reliance on violence. The military seized power again in March, 1976.

The Military Takes Control

Although the military had never run the country with great success, the new *junta* passed a constitutional amendment giving them both executive and legislative powers. This was to become the worst period in Argentina's history.

General Jorge Videla was chosen as the new president and he determined to attack the

country's problems – strikes, corruption and minor terrorist activity – by ruthlessly attacking the "leftists" he decided were the instigators. This campaign of state-sponsored terrorism practiced against the Argentine people became known as The Dirty War. Thousands of Argentineans simply disappeared and became known as *los desaparecidos*. Included among them were priests, nuns, students, reporters, and professors. Anyone suspected of anti-government activities was tortured and killed, rather than arrested and tried for treason. Entire families simply vanished. Estimates of the numbers of dead range from 10,000 to 20,000. Those unfortunates are still turning up in shallow graves all over the country.

Mothers March

The disappearances of these people led to a moving ceremony every Thursday in the Plaza de Mayo, where hundreds of "mothers" march and demand information about their missing loved ones.

Conditions remained the same under Videla's successor, General Viola, and did not change until **Lieutentant General Leopoldo Galtieri** rose to power in 1981. To take the population's mind off The Dirty War and the economic stagnation, he rallied the country to war. They would take back their South Atlantic islands, Las Malvinas, from British control.

Britain had controlled the islands, which they called the Falklands, since the 19th century – much to Argentina's dismay. The rise of strong nationalistic fervor was quickly dispelled when Britain decided to fight for the islands. Outclassed, the Argentine "war" effort was over in two months. Galtieri was forced to resign and was replaced by yet another military man.

Civilian Rule

The humiliation felt by the people over this defeat heightened their dissatisfaction with military rule. Massive demonstrations took place in the Plaza de Mayo and pressure for a change to civilian rule increased. In the election of 1983 a civilian, **Raul Alfonsín**, was elected. Alfonsín re-instituted the independent legislative branch, stopped censorship of the press and encouraged free enterprise. He also proceeded to prosecute the military leaders for their part in The Dirty War.

Unfortunately, the new liberalism and freedom in Argentinean life did not cure the economic problems. Inflation rose to an annual rate of 1,000% shortly after Alfonsín took over. He reacted by freezing wages and prices, and changed the currency from the peso to the austral – a bold plan that initially helped greatly to reduce inflation, yet was unsuccessful in stimulating the economy.

The lack of economic growth, dissatisfaction with Alfonsín's austerity plans, which included heavy taxes on gasoline and electricity, ulti-

mately led to the increased appeal of the Peronist party, the *Justicialistas*. Their candidate, **Carlos Saul Menem**, led a campaign designed to appeal to the traditional supporters of the Peronistas, the poor and the working class. He was elected president in 1989.

With the economy crumbling, Alfonsín stepped down five months early. Menem, cultivating both his playboy image (with appearances on the racetrack and basketball court) and a free market economy, began an economic program of privatization of inefficient government industries combined with wage-price pacts between labor, business and government. Though times were tough in the beginning, the economic success of his programs is apparent and at this writing the Argentine economy is vastly improved. After overturning a law which allowed him to serve only one six-year term, Menem ran for and was elected to his second term as President in 1995.

For a more detailed discussion of inflation and the local currency, see Money Matters, *page 12.*

The Population

Who are the Argentineans of today? They are the descendants of the Spanish colonists and of Sicilian farmers, Portuguese sailors, British adventurers, Greek traders and Lebanese merchants. They may be refugees from a war-ridden land or the privileged heirs of a cattle empire. Their immigrant experience is the history of Argentina, as it has been of all the Americas. The doors were open, the country was ripe

for the picking, and they came from everywhere.

The national constitution contains a paragraph describing the Argentinean as "... anybody in the world who wishes to reside in Argentina." It may not be so simple nowadays, but it was at one time. The 32 million people in Argentina all have roots in far away places; but most of them can claim Europe as their motherland. The strong influence of Spain remains just beneath the surface in many *porteño*s, as residents of Buenos Aires are known. Others can trace their roots to Italy, Germany, Britain and France. Wars have always instigated mass migrations to Argentina, where hopes of peace and prosperity could be fulfilled. That hasn't changed – you will find a surprising number of Southeast Asians in Argentina today.

Buenos Aires is the center of the nation and has a population of more than 15 million. The burden of this intense concentration of people has compelled the government to take drastic measures. Housing projects offering affordable shelter and jobs have been constructed in the interior of Argentina to lure people away from Buenos Aires. This policy has enjoyed only moderate success. Another idea in the works for too many years to mention is the shifting of the capital from Buenos Aires to a town called Viedma in the southeast. This attempt to create another Brasilia has yet to prove successful and Buenos Aires seems reluctant to give up its title.

It's an undeniable truth that Argentineans have a strong identification with their place of birth, their family and their fellow man. Strolling around any city or town in Argentina, one is overwhelmed by monuments, statues and plaques that remind the locals of their history at every turn. This translates into patriotism, and it's a mighty force in this country.

The Culture

Buenos Aires has been called the "Goliath's Head" because of its colossal urban concentration. Many of the 15 million people who live in Greater Buenos Aires left the *pampas* and provinces to enter a city where the night is always young, and commerce and culture stand shoulder to shoulder. The city is a spawning ground for a vibrant cultural life.

*Porteño*s like to boast that their city is home to over 300 theaters, 100-plus art galleries, at least 70 museums and hundreds of bookstores. Furthermore, there are 50 magazines and 12 daily newspapers. Night has a strong hold on everyone here. The general public mills about **Corrientes** – the street that never sleeps – taking in a movie, a pizza, and a bit of local gossip, while intellectuals haunt the all-night bookshops.

Lavalle is the famed "cinema street," with its bright billboards advertising the latest releases – local, foreign, and Hollywood.

Many Buenos Aires churches are architecturally important and/or contain beautiful statuary and museums. They are detailed in the sightseeing section.

*** Tip**

You can walk either of these streets at all hours of the day or night – one of the special pleasures of Buenos Aires.

Culture is everywhere: in the tango parlors and music halls of San Telmo; in the open-air Caminito theater; in La Boca, where the side streets are decorated with murals and sculptures by local artists; in the aristocratic residences of Barrio Norte. Most of all, culture is in the people: the slightly built Indians singing folksongs from Jujuy on the corner of Florida and Viamonte, or the rough old *porteño* with a gold tooth and fedora spilling out his soul in a version of "Sur," a traditional tango of the port city. Theater, opera, ballet, modern music and dance are deeply rooted in the Argentine. This is evident not only in Buenos Aires, but in the passionate devotion to the arts that exists in the smaller towns and communities.

Theater & Film

Theater has a history in Argentina that dates back to 1778, with the Teatro de la Ranchería. Today the theater is an established art form, with the Teatro Colón, the Cervantes, and the General San Martín Theater Complex in the vanguard of all that is new and novel or time-honored and classic. **The Teatro Colón Opera House** has a brilliant past and a shining future. It is truly a theatrical world unto itself. **The Cervantes Theater**, founded in

1921, is the home of the *Comedie Nationale*, the National Theater Ensemble. Here, the audience can watch plays about the *gaucho*, plays by European masters like Pirandello and Molière, zarzuelas (Spanish light opera), and slice-of-life dramas depicting everyday life in Argentina.

Argentinians love the Spanish playwright Federico Garcia Lorca, whose **Bodas de Sangre** *(Blood Wedding)* is usually playing in one of the theaters around town. Adaptations of novels by Kafka and Dostoevsky also reach the stage in this city. Shakespeare and Sophocles are given equal time, while experimental theater from Eastern Europe, Africa and the Third World has been getting a great deal of exposure in recent years.

Corrientes is Buenos Aires' "Broadway." Theaters stand alongside *parrillas* and cinemas. The entertainment here might range from a version of *Porgy and Bess* starring a major media star to a visit by the Russian Kirov Ballet Troupe.

Cinema has always been a favorite medium among Argentineans.

★ Did You Know?

Of the 200 or so first-run films shown annually, about 30 are produced in Argentina.

Ever since the ousting of the military government in 1983, Argentine cinema has achieved a measure of worldwide recognition. In 1986, films like ***La Historia Oficial*** *(The Official Story)* won academy awards and brought to light the suffering caused by The Dirty War that plagued the country in the late 1970s and early 80s.

Music & Dance

Argentineans are proud of the old saying: "The Mexicans descended from the Aztecs, the Peruvians from the Incas, but we descended from boats." Their music, melody and harmony have roots in these diverse pasts.

European influence has always been a strong component of Argentine music. Jesuit missionaries in the 17th century were already composing and teaching music. The works of **Alberdi, Alcorta** and **Blas Parera** (composer of the national anthem) all demonstrate a markedly European style. Later composers like **Boero, de Rogatis** and **Gaito** veered only slightly from the accepted traditions.

Not until the likes of **Alberto Williams, Buchardo** and **Ugarte** was there an attempt to incorporate native Argentine music into the generally European framework. **Juan José Castro**, **Luis Gianneo** and **Alberto Ginastera** stressed the content as much as the music, making new inroads in the caliber of composition. Argentina has many musical art-

ists of international standing: **Bruno Gelber, Martha Argerich, Alberto Lysy, Delia Rigal** and pianist **Pia Sebastiani** are but a few**.**

Popular music, old and new, has been an important form of expression for the country. The truly native music of **Atahualpa Yupanqui** and **Mercedes Sosa** have their roots in the high country. **Gato Barbieri** and **Chick Correa** are contemporary jazz age gurus, while **Pimpinela** and **Marilena Ross** draw mainly young audiences with their slick yet totally Argentinean pop songs.

In ballet, **Liliana Belfiore** and more recently **Julio Bocca** have mesmerized audiences with their talent and grace. Bocca stands at the threshold of ballet immortality in the manner of Nureyev and Baryshnikov. The National Ballet Company at the Teatro Colón has brought many national luminaries to the attention of the world and has been a popular stage for international dancers throughout the decades.

Tango

Ernesto Sábato once remarked "Tango is the most authentic cultural product of the Argentines." Indeed, tango is the quintessential expression of the Argentine spirit. Its history embodies the Argentine experience, especially the marginalization and eventual integration of the immigrants and lower classes who populated the slums of Buenos Aires at the turn of

the century. Most often thought of as a dance, it is a genre which finds its expression in dance, lyrics and composition.

The tango first emerged at the end of the 19th century in the poorest districts of Buenos Aires, where it was danced by the marginal classes, primarily blacks and mulatos. It is a composite of rhythms from the slums of Buenos Aires and the gypsy camps of Spain. Tango blends the fierce passion and high energy of the Spanish **fandango** with the pulsating rhythms and wild contortions of the African-inspired **candombe**, and then tempers them with the more languid melody and fluid movements of the Cuban **habanera,** which arrived in Buenos Aires in the mid-19th century. Other popular dances of the period such as the *cuadrilla*, *milonga*, *vals*, *polca* and the *tango andaluz* eventually found their way into the tango as well.

★ Did You Know?

The tango was originally danced by pairs of men to the music of a small ensemble comprised of a flute, violin and guitar. Around 1910 the accordion-like bandoneón replaced the flute, and would eventually dominate the ensemble.

Believed to incite scandalous behavior, the tango was condemned by the church and prohibited by the local authorities. It was danced in secret until the early 20th century when it

was picked up by young upper-class men who were carousing in the bars, brothels and gaming halls of La Boca, hangouts of bohemians and the working class. Many of these men went on to Paris where they introduced the tango to Parisian high society and other European socialites.

★ Did You Know?

It is believed that the writer Ricardo Güiraldes was the first to dance the tango in Paris in 1910, and that by 1912 it had spread throughout the capital cities of Europe.

The tango, once considered urban and unrespectable, returned to Buenos Aires in the second decade of the 20th century with cachet. In the 1920s tango artists began to gain international acclaim with the singers and musicians gaining celebrity status.

Tango orchestras came into their own, both in Buenos Aires and in Paris, especially with the advent of radio and live broadcasts. By the end of the 20s, the tango took center stage alongside the foxtrot and the Charleston. Before singer Carlos Gardel, the best known tango artist of all time, entered the spotlight at the legendary Armenonville Theater, tangos were merely musical compositions without lyrics.

The Armenonville is in Recoleta, though it was originally on the Plaza Grand Bourg in Palermo Chico.

It was sometime around 1915 that the famed Gardel introduced the tango song, adding an entirely new dimension to the tango. Typically

In 1935, Gardel was tragically killed in a plane crash in Colombia.

written at least partially in Lunfardo, the language of the lower classes, the early lyrics often contained an air of nostalgia and melancholy characteristic of the immigrant experience.

In the 1930s, the lyrics began to take on a strong social context, treating societal ills with poetry and drama. That trend would continue throughout the 40s and 50s with the lyrics becoming even more personal and emotional. However, in the 60s and 70s, the importance of the lyrics would be overshadowed when the modern-day composer Aníbal Troilo and his disciple Astor Piazzolla would raise the tango to near cult status with their innovative compositions.

Literature

> *"Buenos Aires es un hombre/Que tiene grandes las piernas/Grandes los pies y las manos/Y pequeña la cabeza."*

In these lines from her poem "Buenos Aires" the Argentine poet **Alfonsina Storni** compares the immense city to a man with long legs, large feet and large hands, and an amusingly tiny head. She is using the metaphor to describe the way the city grew from a tiny hamlet, spreading outwards until it lost all sense of proportion. The tiny head of Buenos Aires exists only in this fanciful imagery. In actuality, Buenos Aires has a grand tradition of great minds. In its relatively short history, Argentina has produced an enviable body of literature and poetry. Argentina's (and Buenos Aires') literary history

can be traced back to the first great politicians and statesmen like **Echeverría** and **Sarmiento**, who were excellent writers in their own right. Sarmiento was a leader in establishing free, compulsory and non-denominational schooling. He also wrote a brilliant novel, *Facundo,* based on the life of an early pioneer in the new land of Argentina.

The definitive start of literary history lies with the timeless ***Martín Fierro***. Published in 1878, this epic poem based on the life and times of the original *gaucho* was written by **José Hernández**, a politician and writer, and is considered one of the foremost examples of Argentine literature and a manifesto of the Argentine character. The "*gaucho* genre" came into its own and soon other writers such as **Hilario Ascasubi** were expressing themselves in this singularly Argentine way.

✻ Tip for Collectors

Many bookshops feature early printings, including first editions, of books by these authors for a fraction of the price you would expect to pay in the United States.

In the early 1900s Latin American literature went through a metamorphosis. The Modernist Movement was to change the face of Argentine literature. The new prose and poetry became more centered around city life, as the pampas receded into the people's imagination and

opportunities grew within the city limits. **Leopoldo Lugones, Evaristo Carriego, Baldomero Fernández Moreno** and **Alfonsina Storni** appeared on the scene.

The young writers of the 1920s formed a group called the *Martinfierristas* after the literary review they joined forces to publish. One of the most cerebral members of the group was the late **Jorge Luis Borges**, the brilliant essayist-writer who died several years ago at the age of 86. Borges was a unique mind, deeply searching and refreshingly inventive. Many of Borges' titles are on bookshelves around the world.

Ficciones *and* Laberinto *are two excellent collections of his short stories.*

Other prominent names in the early modernist period are **Eduardo Mallea** and **Ricardo Güiraldes**, author of ***Don Segundo Sombra***, a classic depiction of the life of an ordinary Argentine farmhand. Poets and writers of that period, including **Martínez Estrada, Nale Roxio, Macedonio Fernández** and **Molinari,** contributed greatly to the literary scene.

Post-Modernists included **Mujica Láinez, Silvina O'Campo, Adolfo Bioy Casares, Silvina Bullrich, Julio Cortázar** and **Ernesto Sabato**, whose ***Autopista del Sur*** is a modern masterpiece. Sabato is the quintessential Argentine writer; a student of physics, his works test new territories of the psyche.

Even more recently, the novels of **Manuel Puig** have become known to the non-Spanish-speaking world.

★ Did You Know?

Puig's novel, *Kiss of the Spider Woman,* was turned into one of the most interesting films of the 1980s and also made it to Broadway.

Victoria O'Campo

Victoria O'Campo was a maverick in the Modernist Movement, a female Maxwell Perkins in her ability to find talent and promote it. From an immensely wealthy family, she used that fortune to pursue her great love, publishing. She became an ardent publisher of Argentine literature in her own country and abroad. ***Sur***, her literary review, was among the first to introduce the writings of Borges and Sabato.

There are hundreds of bookstores in Buenos Aires, several open 24 hours (sheer heaven for vacationing bookworms). Many are on Corrientes, including shops featuring imported books. The publishing industry is alive and kicking in Argentina, one of the three biggest such industries in the Spanish-speaking world. Over 21 million books are published annually.

★ Did You Know?

Argentina exports about 50% of these books throughout Latin America and has over 200 publishing houses and more than 3,000 printing shops. These

facts and figures attest to the Argentine love for the printed word.

Religion

Argentina is 87% Catholic. The original name of the city as the Spanish explorers christened it is **Nuestra Señora de Buenos Aires** (Our Lady of Good Airs). Despite this, Argentines do not wear religion on their sleeves. They do go to church on Sunday and during the holidays, and will often cross themselves at the shrine of a patron saint, but the country is secular as far as politics and the populace are concerned. Freedom of religion is a firm tenet of the Constitution.

Article 14 states that all Argentines have the right to freely profess their religion.

Other Denominations

Apart from Catholicism, many other religions are widely practiced. There are over three million non-Catholics in Argentina. About one million follow the Evangelical religions, which are divided into various subgroups or sects. There are approximately 300,000 Jews, an equal number of Muslims, and approximately one million Argentines belong to the Russian, Greek and Syrian Orthodox churches, the Armenian church or various Spiritualist religions.

Dining

Rest assured you will not go hungry in Argentina. There are wonderful dining options throughout the country, with the finest, most elegant dining rooms in Buenos Aires. Restau-

rants are small and many augment their space by adding a sidewalk café. Weather permitting, these tables fill up first.

Dinner in Buenos Aires is more formal than in the United States and *porteños* dress in casual chic attire.

Dining hours are 12 to 3:30 pm for lunch and 8 pm to 2 am for dinner. Reservations are not required but are practical on weekends, unless you don't mind waiting for a table.

You never see shorts, even Bermuda style, at night. Restaurants in resort areas such as Bariloche and Ushuaia are far less formal.

You can eat well and inexpensively without resorting to fast foods. Obviously, eating in the country's finer restaurants will add to the pleasure of your trip and you will sometimes want to do so.

To give you an idea of price before you set out, we have devised this price scale based on three courses (appetizer, entrée, dessert), excluding drinks.

Alive Price Scale - Restaurants

Expensive	*$50+ per person*
Moderate	*$25+ per person*
Inexpensive	*under $25 per person*

Cuisine

When asked for the first word that comes to mind for Argentina, many people would respond with *gaucho* or *pampas*. The taste of Argentina is largely related to these two words.

The *pampas* or plains have vast *estancias* (ranches) where cattle and sheep are raised. These are tended by the legendary *gauchos* (cowboys), who wear distinctive attire and are excellent horsemen.

★ Did You Know?

The grasses of the *pampas* are so rich in nutrients that no chemical supplements are required as feed.

The meat is less marbled with fat and therefore is lower in cholesterol. It has a unique flavor and is buttery soft. ***Bife*** reigns supreme here and appears on lunch and dinner plates in a variety of cuts and preparations. *Bife* is grilled on huge skewers over a hardwood fire. Sample a ***parrillada,*** a mélange of different cuts brought to the table on a mini-grill. It includes a variety of sausages and organ meats, and is usually served with a sliced tomato and onion salad and a huge platter of *papas fritas* (French fries). Virtually no part of the animal is discarded. Chewy and slightly charred ***chinchulines*** (cow intestines), **chunky ribs** and ***morcillas*** (blood sausages) accompany other meats as part of the renowned *parrillada.*

*** Tip**

A real treat is to visit an *estancia* for a typical *asado*, an Argentine barbecue (some are within two hours of the city).

A typical *asado* appetizer is *matambre,* a pounded flank steak stuffed with hard boiled eggs, spinach, pieces of ham and vegetables, then rolled jelly-roll style. Marinated in red wine and slowly baked, it is sliced and served with *chimichurri* sauce. *Chimichurri* is a condiment made with oil, vinegar, garlic and peppers. It comes "hot" or "hotter."

Matambre is served cold.

We are sad to note that one of our favorite steakhouses, La Cabaña, a Buenos Aires institution, has closed.

Empañadas are mouth-watering finger foods. Crusty baked dough shells encircle such ingredients as spicy ground beef with black olives, chunks of chicken, ham and cheese or vegetables. Delicious.

Churros are long, thin, hollow pastries that are fried like donuts. They are often sugared or filled with jelly. ***Medias lunas*** (half moons) are particularly popular at breakfast, when they are served with butter and jelly. They are similar to croissants but are less buttery and flakey. Pastries are delicious and offerings include German-style strudels, Italian-style cannoli and French-style tarts. These are often served at high tea or with a *cortado*, an espresso that is cut (*cortado)* with steamed milk.

Argentines never take their coffee and dessert together. The sweets are eaten before or after and are often accompanied by a glass of water.

Pizzas are very popular here and they are excellent. Toppings include cheese, olives, anchovies, ham, meatballs, sausage and others. One restaurant offers 50 different varieties. ***Panchos*** are beef hot dogs usually sold by street vendors. You add the condiments. ***Fiambres*** are toasted sandwiches with a selection of ingredients.

What To Drink

Any Argentinean will tell you that the only drink that does justice to beef is good Argentinean **red wine**. The excellent vineyards in the Mendoza region produce the grapes that become first class wine. The regions of Cuyo, San Juan, Cafayate, Salta and Catamarca supply the entire country with premier wines. These local wines are inexpensive, as are the excellent carbonated mineral waters. Many *whiskerías* and bars in town dispense drinks into the wee hours.

Argentine **Scotch** is quite good, so there is no need to order the imported brands, which are triple the price at the very least.

> * Tip
>
> *Los Criadores* (Breeder's Choice) is one brand to try, and it's as good as anything from the Scottish highlands.

Argentina is the only place where you can find an after-dinner drink called ***Legui***. It's a cordial named after one of Argentina's most illustrious jockeys. Most bars stock Legui, and it makes a wonderful gift. Stash a bottle in your suitcase before you leave the country.

A non-alcoholic beverage that you might enjoy is a *submarino*. It's a glass of cold milk with a spoonful of chocolate syrup sunk to the bottom. Argentines don't stir it. They drink a little milk, lick some of the chocolate off the spoon and continue this process until the glass is empty.

Buenos Aires

More than any capital city we've ever visited, Buenos Aires is the heartbeat of Argentina. On the *pampas*, in the *campo* or in the remote corners of Patagonia – all of Argentina's roads eventually lead to Buenos Aires. One of every three Argentines lives within its borders. The city is at once an anomaly and a reflection of the Argentineans. Where the pace of the rest of the country is calm and unhurried, Buenos Aires is energetic and fast-paced. It offers a charming combination of European tradition and Latin attitude. The city most resembles Paris. Many of its imposing buildings were built in French style and its wide tree-lined boulevards are dotted with colorful sidewalk cafés. Fashionably dressed *porteños* (people of the port, as residents are called) move briskly along pedestrian promenades lined with boutiques selling fine leathers and furs or browse in chic art galleries.

The city's pace is daunting and you will have to reset your inner clock to keep up. Most restaurants don't even begin to serve dinner until at least 9 pm, and *porteños* linger over espresso till the wee hours. Most restaurants serve until 2 am weeknights and even later on weekends; while nightclubs are in full swing until 4 or even 5 am.

The **Teatro Colón**, the refurbished world-class opera house in which Caruso sang, is a popular night stop, as are the many theaters and night-

clubs throughout the city. These run the gamut, and we'll leave it to you to find your niche. However, no visit to Argentina would be complete without a visit to a tango club. Tango is Argentina's contribution to the popular music scene. Born in clubs, music houses and bordellos in the late 19th century, tango mixes the candomble rhythms of Africa with the haunting melodies of Southern Spain and Italy. At its peak after the Second World War, interest waned in the 1960s and 1970s. Fortunately, the intricate dance steps and sultry melodies are once again very popular.

If Buenos Aires is your only Argentinean destination, we suggest a daytrip or overnight to the nearby *pampas*. Just an hour's drive or train ride from center city, the world of the *gaucho* has rolling pastures, corrals of cattle and sprawling *estancias* (ranches), which are often home to priceless collections of silver and other treasures.

Gauchos

If the fabled *gaucho* no longer exists, don't tell the Argentineans. The lore and legends are kept alive by city and country dweller alike. The *gaucho*, erect astride a handsome horse, a *maté* gourd in one hand and his *boleador* (lariat) in the other, is the personification of the country's pioneer spirit, courage and dogged independence. He is loyal to nature and true to himself, a romantic and an idealist – in short, an Argentine.

Buenos Aires, a familar place south of the equator, yet closer to Madrid and Paris than a map would indicate, has absorbed its European sons and daughters and borrowed the best of their cultures, architecture and savoir faire. It is the city that inspired its native son Jorge Luis Borges to write:

> *A mi se me hace cuenta que empezó Buenos Aires. La juzgo tan eterna come el agua y el aire.* (It seems to me that there has always been a Buenos Aires. She is as eternal as the water and the air.")

Upon Arrival

International flights land at **Ezeiza International Airport**, which is about 45 minutes from the heart of Buenos Aires. It is modern, sparkling clean and organized with baggage claims, Customs officials, car rentals and money changing facilities (*cambios)* all readily accessible. There is also a duty-free shop where you can buy cigarettes, liquor, perfume and other goods at bargain rates. You are permitted to take your purchases with you into Buenos Aires.

✻ Tip

Pick up maps and literature, including a current copy of ***Guest***, Buenos Aires' monthly magazine at the **Secretario de Turismo** office.

You then play roulette with Customs' red light/green light system. You press a button and if

the green light flashes you simply pass through. However, if the light flashes red, you may have to go through a perfunctory search of your luggage. After passing through Customs, head left towards the **Transportes** sign, where you can make arrangements for transportation into the city, as well as book accommodations or confirm your hotel reservation. Give the government clerks at the desk a list of our suggestions and they'll book you a room and give you a sheet listing the name and address of the hotel as well as the rate.

Transportation to Buenos Aires

The **Manuel Tienda Leon** and **San Martín buses** are your best bet for getting downtown. Both stop at the major hotels throughout the city, though there is a slight difference in the fare. San Martín (☎ 4480-9464), charges $11 one-way and $25 round-trip, while Manuel Tienda Leon (☎ 4314-3636) charges $14 one-way and $25 round-trip. The San Martín airport kiosk is next to the Varig ticket counter in terminal B.

You may need to change buses. Check with the driver upon boarding.

★ Tip

Unlike the Manuel Tienda Leon buses which operate 24-hours, the San Martín buses run from 5:15 am to 9:15 pm.

Another option is a fixed fare or ***remis* cab**. The fare should be $45-$50, or $70 round-trip. If you know the time and date of your depar-

ture, you should make arrangements for your return to the airport at the time you purchase your ticket.

A final option is **public bus #86**, which leaves from in front of the International Hotel. The fare is $1 and it will drop you at the downtown bus station 1½ hours later, where you can catch a cab to your hotel.

Baggage, especially if you have a lot, can be a problem.

Getting Around Buenos Aires

By Taxi

The raised flag and lighted top mean the cab is free.

The meter starts at $1.10.

Looking like beetles scurrying through a grassy field, the small black and yellow cabs of Buenos Aires are readily available, except during the morning and evening rush hours. They can be hailed on the street or called by telephone. Cabs have meters which register distance and time. (Occasionally, if rates have risen and the meters have not yet been adjusted, at the end of the ride, the driver will show you a chart on which the appropriate fare will be listed.) Fares are reasonable and, since cabs are a convenient way to travel from the center of the city to the outlying *barrios*, you'll probably use them often. Hosts at most nightclubs or restaurants will usually call a cab for you (occasionally for a small charge). Or, you can call yourself – **Pídalo** S.A. is a 24-hour service at ☎ 903-4991/1142.

*** Tip**

Day or night, drivers do not expect a tip, but you should round out the fare.

By Subway

Faster and cheaper than taxis, the *Subte* deserves kudos for efficiency, economy and speed. Even the aesthetics are a welcome surprise. The glazed tiles that line the subterranean walls were baked by artisans in Spain and France and the brightly colored and luminous tunnels are art galleries in their own right. The system dates from the 1920s and costs little more now than it did then. You can explore Buenos Aires from Retiro to Palermo and transfer along the way. There are five separate lines that intersect at various points along the way, and trips rarely take more than 25 minutes. The wait for a train is usually a few minutes.

The fare is 50¢.

The Peru Station on Linea A is just as it was in the 1920s.

The **Primera Junta** or **A line** runs from the Plaza de Mayo to Primera Junta. The **B line** runs from L.N. Alem to Federico Lacroze. The **C line** runs from Constitución to Retiro, the terminus stations of the two suburban railroads, and has transfer points at Avenida de Mayo (for the A line) and Diagonal Norte (for the B and D lines) and Independencia (for the E line). The **D line** runs from Catedral to José Hernández with transfers at Carlos Pellegrino (for the B line) and Diagonal Norte (for the C line). The **E line** runs from Bolívar to Plaza de los Virreyes.

For complete details, pick up a Peuser map at one of the kiosks.

*** Tip**

Trains stop running at 11:30 pm, at which time a bus or taxi is your best alternative.

By Bus

Called *colectivos*, buses are an extremely popular way for *porteños* to move through the city. We give them a less enthusiastic vote than the *Subte* because there are so many lines that it is easy to become confused. Also, since buses are often overcrowded, it is hard to see where you are going.

*** Tip**

A word of advice: make sure the driver knows exactly where you want to go. If you don't make a point of telling him and you are the only passenger for your destination, forget it! The bus will keep on moving. Practice just enough Spanish to say "I am going to..." *(Quiero ir a...)* and you won't be sorry.

Definitely get a Peuser map if you intend to use the buses.

Bus stops in central locations often have a map outlining the individual route of each bus that stops there. It is a good idea to become familiar with these.

The Most Important Bus Lines

#10 stops in Palermo;

#11 stops in Belgrano;

#17 takes you into the heart of Recoleta;

#24 and #25 make the rounds from Recoleta to La Boca and environs;

#44 and #55 take you to the Barrancas (Belgrano);

#60 takes you all the way to Tigre (see the excursion section for Tigre, page 197).

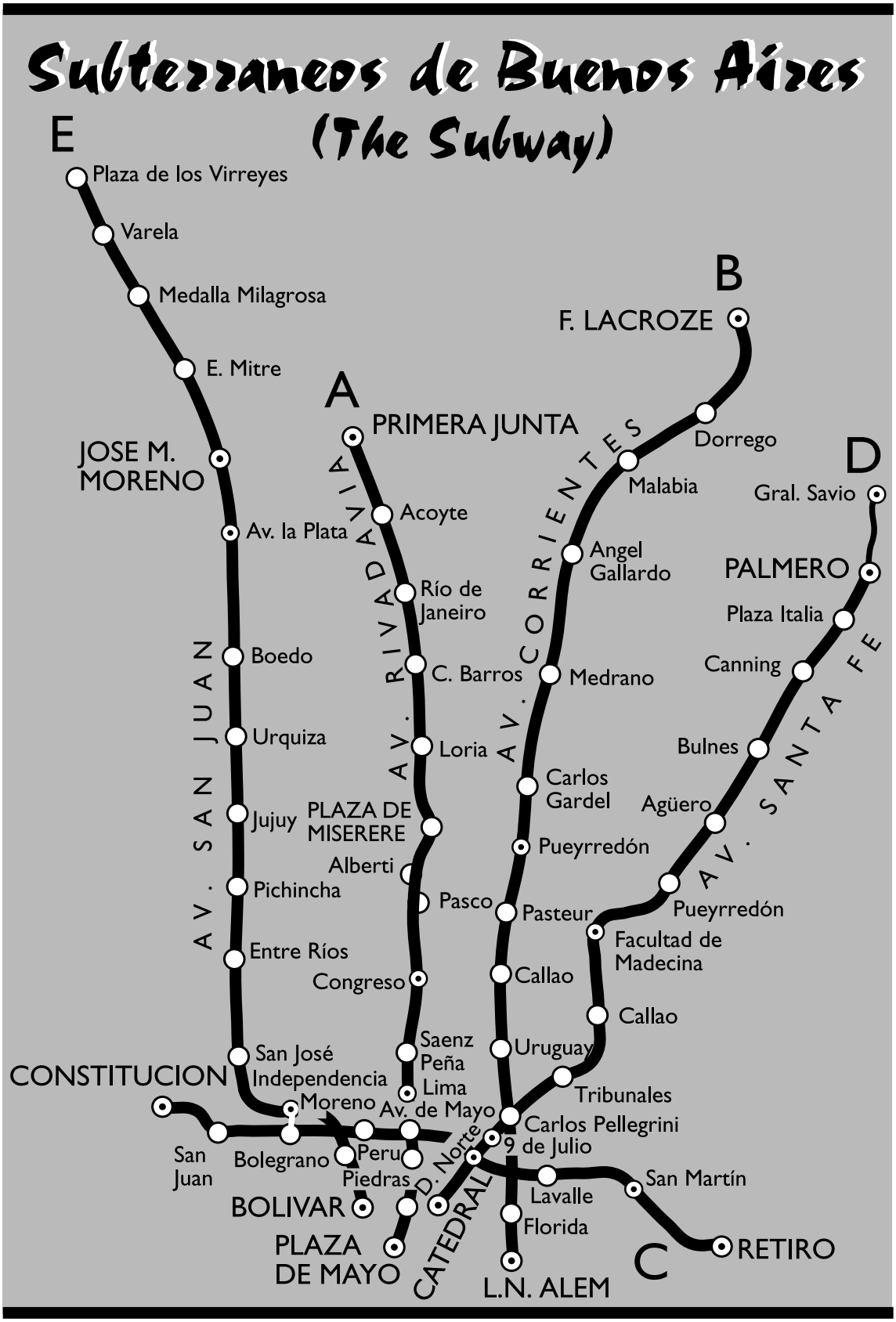
There are also buses that run back and forth between the city and Ezeiza Airport; namely the #86 and #138. However, it is generally impractical to take your luggage onto one of these inevitably overcrowded buses.

City Tours

For an overview of the city's sites and sights you may want to sign up for a half-day city tour. Virtually every hotel has an arrangement with a local tour operator. You will be picked up at your hotel and, for the most part, guides speak English. Reliable agencies include **Buenos Aires Tur** at Lavalle 1444 or **Teletour** at Corrientes 579.

A Note On Safety

You can feel comfortable walking through the downtown area of Buenos Aires even late at night. Streets are well lit and restaurants and


Subterraneos de Buenos Aires
(The Subway)
E
Plaza de los Virreyes
Varela
Medalla Milagrosa
E. Mitre
JOSE M. MORENO
Av. la Plata
Boedo
Urquiza
Jujuy
Pichincha
Entre Ríos
San José
CONSTITUCION
Independencia
Moreno
San Juan
Bolegrano
A
PRIMERA JUNTA
AV. RIVADAVIA
Acoyte
Río de Janeiro
C. Barros
Loria
PLAZA DE MISERERE
Alberti
Pasco
Congreso
Saenz Peña
Lima
Av. de Mayo
Peru
Piedras
BOLIVAR
PLAZA DE MAYO
B
F. LACROZE
Dorrego
AV. CORRIENTES
Malabia
Angel Gallardo
Medrano
Carlos Gardel
Pueyrredón
Pasteur
Callao
Uruguay
Carlos Pellegrini
9 de Julio
D. Norte
CATEDRAL
Lavalle
Florida
L.N. ALEM
D
Gral. Savio
PALMERO
Plaza Italia
Canning
AV. SANTA FE
Bulnes
Agüero
Pueyrredón
Facultad de Madecina
Callao
Tribunales
San Martín
C
RETIRO

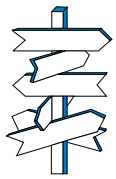
clubs are open till the early hours, meaning that there are always people in the streets. Violent street crime is not the major problem here that it is in many other big cities. It is usually eclipsed by petty thievery.

Use the same common sense you would at home

- Leave your finest jewelry behind or store it with your passport in a safety deposit box in your hotel.
- Carry a photocopy of your passport with you.
- Don't carry large sums of cash. Use traveler's checks or a credit card instead.

Women Traveling Solo

Unescorted women will inevitably be the recipients of the *piropo* – a well-honed come-on that is second nature to men here. Don't take it seriously and don't act pleased by the attention. Politely ignore it. Women traveling solo (or without a male companion) are still an unusual occurrence here. In fact, some bars and nightclubs will not admit unescorted women. If you stick to bars and clubs in hotels or head to recommended night spots such as Verde, Buenos Aires News and Divino, you should feel as comfortable as you would at a club in the States.



Porteños rarely use the words calle (street) or avenida (avenue).

Orientation

Buenos Aires is quite flat, and streets, laid out on straight lines, cross at right angles to form mini-plazas, which are often spots of greenery. The city's downtown area is not large and can be easily walked. Both a commercial and cultural center, it is bordered loosely by Avenida Libertador (N), Paseo Colón (E), Avenida Belgrano (S) and Entre Rios (W). The downtown area is encircled by interesting neighborhoods (*barrios*) which, while not technically part of downtown, are an integral part of the inner city.

Downtown Streets & Landmarks

Avenida Rivadavia

Although you will spend little time on it, Avenida Rivadavia is a key orientation street in this downtown grid. A particularly long street, Rivadavia cuts through the city from east to west, creating large north and south sectors. Chances are that you'll spend most of your time in the northern sector, where the hotels, restaurants and shops are located. Avenida Rivadavia is also the point at which street names change and the numbering system begins. Blocks are numbered in hundreds. For example, Calle Florida in the northern section runs for 11 blocks from Avenida Rivadavia to the Plaza San Martín. #960 Calle Florida is on the 10th block north of Avenida Rivadavia. #960 south of

Avenida Rivadavia is on the tenth block of Calle Peru. Important downtown streets follow:

North of Rivadavia . . .	South of Rivadavia
Reconquista	Defensa
San Martín	Bolívar
Florida	Peru
Maipú	Chacabuco
Esmeralda	Piedras
Suipacha	Tacuari

Rivadavia starts at the Plaza de Mayo and parallels Avenida de Mayo until the latter merges into it at the Plaza del Congreso.

Streets running parallel to Avenida Rivadavia (E-W) do not change names in the downtown area.

Plaza de Mayo

The city's oldest square, dates back to the second founding of Buenos Aires in 1580 when it was designated the Plaza Mayor, the city's principal square. It has served as a large marketplace and a hangman's gallows. This lovely green oasis, surrounded by important government buildings, has been the site of nearly all of the important political and social events in Argentina's history. Surrounding the plaza are the **Casa Rosada**, the seat of the executive branch of the Argentine government; the **Cabildo**, the colonial town hall; and the **Metropolitan Cathedral**, where Argentina's national hero General San Martín is buried.

✻ Tip

Look down Avenida de Mayo from the Casa Rosada for a lovely view of the Plaza del Congreso. For a view of the Obelisk, look down Saenz Peña, also known as Diagonal Norte.

Puerto Madero

Puerto Madero is one of the city's most important and most successful urban renewal programs to date. Just as New York did with the South Street Seaport, Boston with Faneuil Hall and Baltimore with the Inner Harbor, Buenos Aires has taken the empty warehouses and docks of Puerto Madero and transformed them into a thriving social and commercial center. Sidewalk cafés and restaurant terraces line the beautifully landscaped riverfront promenade to provide a welcome respite from the hustle and bustle of downtown Buenos Aires. Its central location, spanning the waterfront directly behind the Plaza de Mayo, has made Puerto Madero a mecca for the politicians, executives and others who work in the area. Lawyers, financiers and other *empresarios* are snatching up office space just as quickly as yuppies are moving into luxury lofts in the refurbished warehouses. Many of Buenos Aires' best known restaurateurs have moved in, turning Puerto Madero into a gastronomic center that caters to the power lunch set by day and social climbers at night.

*** Tip**

Combine a morning visit to the Plaza de Mayo and Plaza de los Dos Congresos with lunch at one of Puerto Madero's fine restaurants or come in the evening for dinner.

Plaza del Congreso

This is a wide expanse marked by interesting sculptures, including Rodin's *The Thinker*, and gurgling fountains. It is actually three mini-plazas that encircle the Congress building, seat of the legislative branch of government.

The Thinker (El Pensador) is one of only two existing copies of this statue.

★ Did You Know?

Plaza del Congreso is the "kilometer 0" point on all roadmaps of Argentina, a real life example of the saying "All roads lead here."

Avenida de Mayo

The first official street in the city, Avenida de Mayo links the two plazas above. Take note of the various architectural styles of the buildings lining the street. Some were considered skyscrapers in the late 18th century when they soared to five stories.

★ Did You Know?

South America's first subway was built beneath this street.

Avenida 9 de Julio

At 450 feet across, 9 de Julio is the world's widest street, created by knocking down the buildings that ran through its center. It is actually composed of three streets. The outer streets are **Cerrito/Lima** on the west and **Carlos Pellegrini/Bernardo de Irigoyen** on the east. The central strip, **9 de Julio**, does not change its name for its entire length. Occupying center stage is the towering **Obelisco** (obelisk) at the **Plaza de la República**, which commemorates the country's 400th anniversary.

✻ Tip

Rather than try to cross Avenida 9 de Julio, head to one of the underground passages. On our last visit, we were surprised to find that many of these subterranean passageways are commercial centers unto themselves, lined with small shops and restaurants.

Arnold was delighted to find that numerous booksellers had set up shop underground.

Calle Florida

This pedestrian promenade is the liveliest street downtown. Along its length are posh boutiques, the Galerías Pacífico shopping mall, a branch of Harrod's department store, hot dog vendors, street musicians ranging from scratch bands to classical guitarists, and lots of *porteños* who work and shop here. It runs 11

blocks from Avenida Rivadavia to the Plaza San Martín.

Avenida Corrientes/Calle Lavalle

Avenida Corrientes, which runs east to west, is known as the "street that never sleeps." This wide thoroughfare is home to cinemas, fast food places and late night clubs and restaurants, along with a large number of bookshops that stay open well past midnight. Adjacent to Corrientes, **Calle Lavalle** mirrors it on a smaller scale. Closed to traffic, it comes alive at night when the streets are crowded with moviegoers and diners headed to the many moderately priced restaurants here.

Avenida Santa Fe/Avenida Callao

Lined with attractive shops and art galleries, this is another fine shopping area. Airline offices and provincial tourist boards are located here. Avenida Callao is at the heart of the trendy cinema/eatery area in the near north side of the city.

Callao becomes Entre Rios.

Plaza San Martín

This is one of the few higher areas in a very flat city, and it is dominated by a large park.

★ Did You Know?

In earlier times this hilly spot was called *El Retiro* for the monastery there, which later served as an army barracks.

Retiro means retreat.

When Sarmiento became president he built a monument to honor General San Martín and planned the park around it. The lower park retained the name which it shares with Buenos Aires' large railroad station. The nearby clock tower was a gift from Argentineans of British ancestry. Its plaza, formerly called Plaza Británica, was renamed Plaza Fuerza Aérea following the Malvinas Conflict (The Falklands War).

Most porteños still refer to this as the Plaza Británica.

Barrios

Much like New York, Chicago and Vancouver, Buenos Aires is a melting pot created by millions of immigrants, who, while Argentine to the core, have remained sentimentally attached to their ethnic origins. The city has approximately 50 *barrios.* Some, built around a plaza and church, reflect a specific ethnic group, while others are fashionable or working class residential neighborhoods. The *barrios* are a jumble of old and new, with modern apartment buildings adjacent to older ones whose glass-lined French doors open onto plant-filled wrought iron balconies. **Recoleta**, **San Telmo**, **La Boca** and **Palermo** are most representative of the city's charm and character.

Recoleta

Located in the northern part of the city, Recoleta is the city's most fashionable residential area, home to elegant restaurants, deluxe hotels and fine shops, as well as several interesting museums. Key streets are **Avenida**

Alvear and **Avenida Quintana.** One of its best known attractions, the **Recoleta Cemetery**, is the resting site of Eva Perón and other well-known Argentineans.

✻ Tip

Although the proper name is **La Recoleta**, *porteños* simply refer to it as Recoleta.

Not far from Recoleta at the end of Avenida 9 de Julio, is a cul-de-sac known as **La Recova de Posadas** (The Marketplace). This upscale outdoor shopping gallery is home to outdoor cafés, posh boutiques and some of the city's finest restaurants. The Hyatt Hotel is also here.

San Telmo

When San Telmo was established in the 16th century, it was the heart of the city. An outbreak of yellow fever caused the wealthy residents to flee this southern barrio. Immigrants moved in, turning the grand homes and villas of the wealthy into tenement houses. Once badly rundown, San Telmo underwent a major refurbishing and is thriving once again. Its colonial buildings now house art galleries and antique stores. The city's best **flea market** is held in Plaza Dorrego on Sundays year-round. The tango clubs clustered here are key to the neighborhood's popularity in the evenings. **Calle Defensa** is the area's main street, while **Carlos Calvo** is restaurant row.

Set aside some time in the afternoon for a coffee or drink in one of the outdoor cafés on Plaza Dorrego.

La Boca

A picturesque area, populated by working class Italians, La Boca has the feel and mouthwatering aroma of a Southern Italian village. Cobblestoned streets are lined with colorfully painted small homes that have remained unchanged for a century. Inexpensive restaurants and lively clubs that open late and close early in the morning have made La Boca popular after dark. **Necochea** is the main street here**.**

Warning

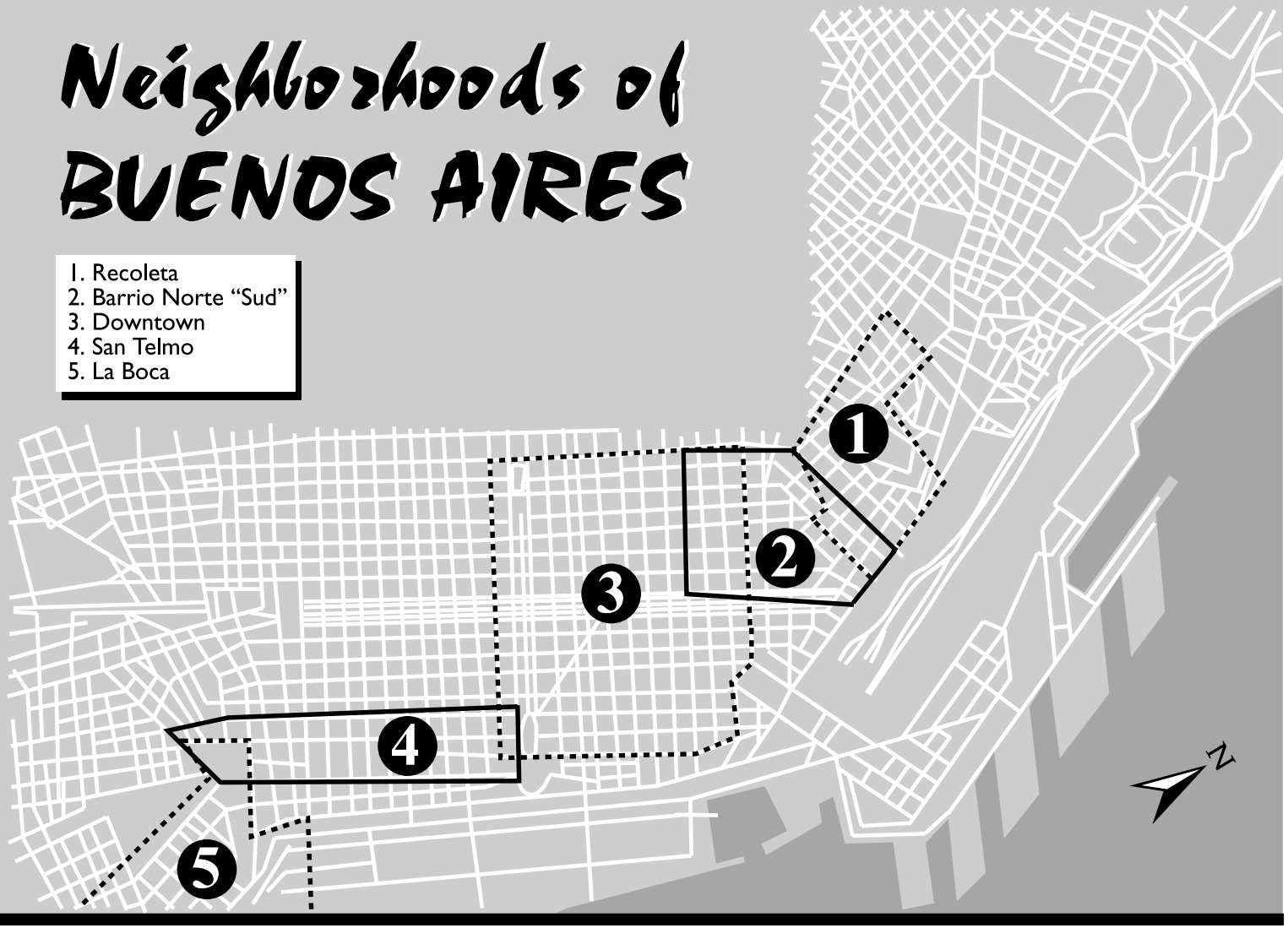
You need to exercise more caution in La Boca than you do in other areas of Buenos Aires, especially at night.

Palermo

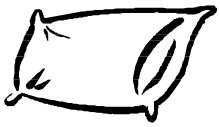
While the other *barrios* we've mentioned are urban, Palermo, a large *barrio* north of the city, has a suburban flavor. It can be reached by commuter railroad. It is home to **Los Bosques de Palermo**, a huge park which is a popular weekend destination for bikers, joggers and small boat enthusiasts. The **City Zoo**, **Botanical Gardens** and **Planetarium** are also here, as are the ***hipódromo*** (race track) and **National Polo Fields**.

Neighborhoods of BUENOS AIRES

1. Recoleta
2. Barrio Norte "Sud"
3. Downtown
4. San Telmo
5. La Boca



Best Places to Stay in Buenos Aires



Travelers to Buenos Aires are lucky when it comes to hotel accommodations. The hotels here have large rooms and attractive public areas. Accommodations run the gamut from huge 500-room hotels to smaller places with 30 rooms or fewer, where everyone gets to know you on the first day.

Our price scale is designed to give you a ball-park figure around which to plan your budget. It is based solely on prices for a double room, double occupancy.

Single rooms are generally about 20% less.

The Alive Scale

Deluxe	$200+
Expensive	$120+
Moderate	$60-120
Inexpensive	$35-60
Budget	under $35

Hotels are listed by order of preference within each price range. All accept major credit cards unless otherwise noted. Most offer a buffet breakfast, the cost of which is included in your rate.

☆ The Star System ☆

Argentine hotels operate on a star system in which five is the highest and one is the lowest. All of the hotels selected have at least a two-star rating. Extra stars usually mean pools, shops and room service. Five stars designate the ultimate in luxury. Four-star hotels are deluxe or business class. All two- and three-star hotels provide the fundamentals: clean rooms, private baths, fresh linens and civility.

✻ Tip

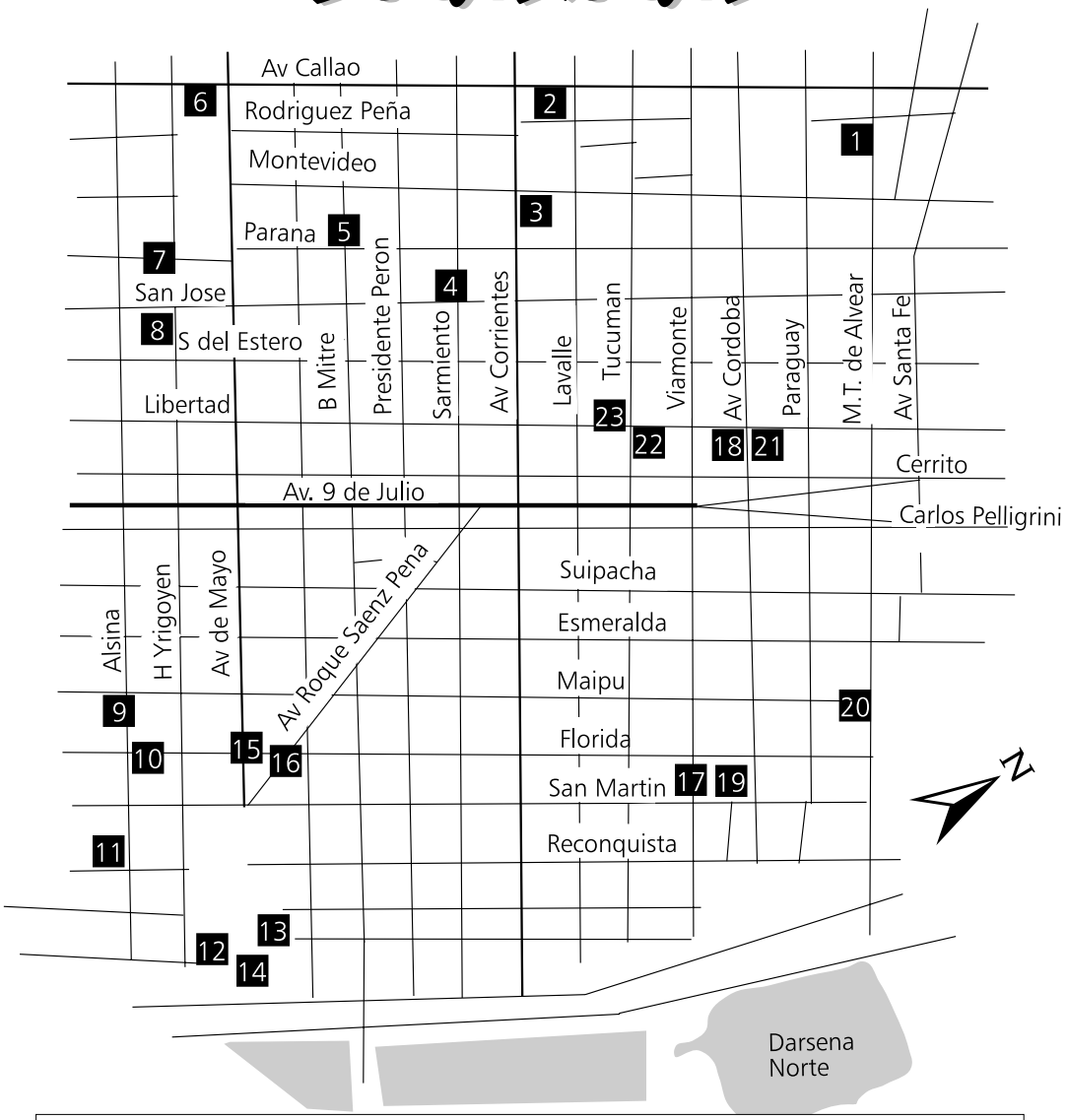
Telephone numbers as listed are local. To make reservations when calling from the United States, you must first dial 011-54-1 and then the number we've listed.

Deluxe Hotels

THE BUENOS AIRES SHERATON HOTEL AND TOWERS ☆☆☆☆☆
San Martín 1225
☎ *4318-9000*
(Toll-free in the US ☎ 800-325-3535)
Fax 4318-9353
800 rooms, 23 floors

The Buenos Aires Sheraton, located near the new IBM Plaza, is a home away from home for North Americans. It is sleek, well-run and boasts the highest view in town from its rooftop lounge, the Atalaya (Watchtower). It has every-

Downtown



1. Consejo Nacional de Educacion
2. Catedral Metropolitana
3. Teatro Presidente Alvear
4. Centro Cultural General San Martin
5. Iglesia de la Piedad
6. Monumento a Los Dos Congresos
7. Edificio de la Inmobiliaria
8. Edificio Barolo
9. Museo de Motivos Argentinos "José Hernandez"
10. Honorable Consejo Deliberante
11. Museo de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires
12. Museo de la Casa de Gobierno
13. Casa de Gobierno
14. Monumento a Cristobal Colon
15. Diario La Prensa
16. Palacio Municipal
17. Galerias Pacifico
18. Templo de la Congregacion Israelita Argentina
19. Circulo Naval
20. Museo de Armas de la Nacion
21. Teatro Nacional Cervantes
22. Monumento a Carlos Maria de Alvear / Teatro Colón
23. Palacio de Justicia

thing you would expect from a five-star hotel: an Olympic-size pool, tennis courts, a health club and a shopping mall featuring fine leather shops, boutiques and a branch of H. Stern Jewelers. Restaurants include La Pampa (24-hour coffee shop), Cardinale (Italian cuisine), and the formal El Aljibe.

Since the Sheraton and Park Hotels are connected, guests can use the facilities at either hotel and charge them to their room.

Rooms are spacious and modern; many come with fine views of downtown. Ample closet space, separate dressing rooms, well-equipped bathrooms and plush towels are the hallmarks of this first-class hotel. Color television, direct dial phones and mini-fridges are additional luxuries.

PARK TOWER ☆☆☆☆☆
Avenida Leandro N. Alem 1193
☎ 4318-9390
(Toll-free in the US & Canada ☎ 800-325-3589)
Fax 4318-9394
180 rooms (23 floors)

Luxury takes on a whole new dimension at the Park Tower, an ITT Sheraton Luxury Collection hotel. From the lavishly baroque furnishings in the lobby, replete with gold and marble, to the elegantly appointed guest rooms, the Park Tower magically transports you to a sumptous haven akin to the Court of Louis XIV, albeit with the ultimate in modern comfort and convenience. Exceptional service and amenities define the Park Tower experience. Guests enjoy 24-hour exclusive Butler Service, tea or coffee served at bedside after the daily wake-up call, a selection of local or international newspapers

delivered daily, exclusively designed bathroom linen, an in-room stereo system with CD player, cassette and radio, bottled water, cellular phone, dual-line direct dial telephone with computer connection, access to the private Health Club and Spa, and complimentary pressing of two garments upon arrival. Of course, none of this comes cheap, but, you only live once.

The splurge of a lifetime.

PARK HYATT BUENOS AIRES ☆☆☆☆☆
Posadas 1086/88
☎ *4326-1234*
Fax (guests) 4326-3032
Fax (sales/reservations) 4393-1937
E-mail hyatt@phba.interman.com.ar
165 rooms

Visiting celebrities often stay at the Hyatt.

The Park Hyatt offers all the five-star amenities you've come to expect from a Hyatt Hotel. It's located at the end of 9 de Julio just a few blocks from Recoleta; several of our recommended restaurants are within walking distance. Not far from the banking center, the Hyatt caters to business travelers, offering them conference facilities and two floors reserved for traveling executives. A health spa/fitness center with an indoor pool, sauna and beauty salon and formal as well as informal dining options round out a stay at the Hyatt.

The Alvear is considered one of the finest and most luxurious hotels in the world.

ALVEAR PALACE HOTEL ☆☆☆☆☆
Avenida Alvear 1891
☎ 4804-7777
Toll-free in the US ☎ 800-223-6800
(In New York 212-838-3110)
Fax 4804-9246
E-mail alvear@satlink.com
www.alvearpalace.com
200 rooms, 9 floors
Deluxe

This is surely one of the loveliest of the five-star hotels. Its European style and ambience and cozy suites have made it a long-time favorite of discriminating people. La Bourgogne Restaurant serves haute French cuisine in elegant surroundings.

Rooms have a decidedly Parisian flair and many feature French period furnishings with elegant touches such as candle sconces, escritoires and brass lamps. All have direct dial phone service, central heating and air conditioning and color television.

CAESAR PARK ☆☆☆☆☆
Posadas 1232/46
☎ 4819-1296
(In US, ☎ 800-223-6800)
Fax 4819-1121
152 rooms

An excellent location in Recoleta across from the Patio Bullrich Shopping Center is one of the many reasons for choosing the Caesar Park. Fine dining is another of the highlights at this Westin Hotel. The cold buffet, featuring pâtés,

terrines, mousses and other delicacies at the Café del Plata is perfect for lunch or a late supper. The complimentary breakfast buffet served here in the morning is equally fine. Sushi and Japanese cuisine are featured at Midori. High tea with scones, tortes and assorted pastries is served every afternoon in the Lobby Bar and the traditional English bar, Cheers. Finally, for a refined candlelight dinner, you needn't venture further than Il Cesare, the hotel's formal restaurant. The Caesar Park also has modern fitness facilities, state-of-the-art conference facilities, consummate service and immaculate accommodations.

Internationally known restaurateur Harry Cipriani opened a fine eatery opposite the hotel on Avenida Posadas, near Harper's restaurant.

THE MARRIOT PLAZA HOTEL ☆☆☆☆☆
Florida 1005
☎ 4318-3000
(In US, ☎ 800-522-2588)
Fax 4318-3008
390 rooms

A member of the Leading Hotels of the World, the Plaza was only recently acquired by Marriott.

Located in the heart of one of the best shopping districts in South America, the old world Plaza Hotel keeps a firm grip on the good reputation it has enjoyed for decades. Over the years it has attracted the crème de la crème of Argentinean, European and American travelers, all of whom appreciate being surrounded by the finer things in life. Renovations have kept what are quite old fashioned rooms in pace with the changing demands of modern travelers. There is a small pool.

✻ Tip

Many rooms have wonderful views of the Plaza San Martín, so be sure to request one.

LIBERTADOR KEMPINSKI ☆☆☆☆☆

Avenida Córdoba 690 and Maipú
☎ 4322-8800
(In US, ☎ 800-426-3135)
Fax 4322-9703
200 rooms, 22 floors

Avenida Córdoba is a wide, bustling thoroughfare.

Located just a few blocks from Avenida 9 de Julio, the Libertador is a comfortably large hotel with well-furnished rooms that are clean and spacious. Three extra deluxe suites are the pride of this hotel, along with two fine dining rooms: The Grand Bourg and La Pergola, which has been one of the city's top international eateries for quite a few years now.

There is a swimming pool and sundeck under a sliding glass roof on La Terraza, the top floor of the hotel.

THE CLAIRIDGE ☆☆☆☆☆

Tucumán 535
☎ 4314-2020
(In US, ☎ 800-223-5652)
Fax 4314-8022
E-mail reservations@clairidge-hotel.com
www.clairidge-hotel.com
160 rooms, 14 floors

The Clairidge is a member of the Steinberger Reservation Service and a popular choice for weddings.

The Clairidge ranks among the premier hotels of the city and has been refurbished, adding even greater luster. The decor, with its Greco-

Roman columns of white marble at the entrance and timeless interior, is decidedly English. The Clairidge maintains an extensive wine cellar and four distinctive salons. These unique rooms give the hotel much of its refined atmosphere. The Reading and Tea rooms are decorated with an English country flavor full of warm wood, flowers and leaded tudor windows.

HOTEL CROWNE PLAZA PANAMERICANO ☆☆☆☆☆

Carlos Pellegrini
☎ *4348-5000*
Fax 4348-5250
E-mail panatel@mail.microstar.com.ar
204 rooms, 18 floors

Facing the Obelisk and the Teatro Colón, the Crowne Plaza towers above its neighbors, offering first class accommodations along with executive services, a swimming pool and exercise room. The restaurant, Tomo I has earned a well-deserved reputation as one of the finest restaurants in Buenos Aires.

✻ Tip

The Panamericano is just steps away from the restaurants and nightlife on Calle Florida and Galerías Pacífico.

An Ultra-Deluxe Business Hotel

HOTEL INTER-CONTINENTAL BUENOS AIRES ☆☆☆☆☆
Moreno 809
☎ 4345-6202
Fax 4345-6204
In US, ☎ 800-327-0200
315 rooms, 19 floors

Business travelers also enjoy a complimentary cocktail in the afternoon.

"Business Rooms" feature everything you wish you had in your own office, as well as a bed.

If ever there was a hotel that could take the work out of business travel, it is the Inter-Continental. In addition to its countless conference facilities, the Inter-Continental has set aside three floors of guestrooms designed specifically for business travelers. "Business Rooms" feature fax machines with printing and copying capabilities, dual-line telephones with voice mail and a data jack for a laptop computer, an oversized desk with an ergomanic chair, enhanced lighting, a video cassette recorder, a coffee maker, a sitting area, complimentary movies, local and foreign newspapers and shoeshine service.

Of course, the Inter-Continental features all the amenities we've grown to expect of a hotel of its category, including non-smoking rooms, express check-out and airport transfer, a pool, fitness center and fine dining. It's located right in the heart of downtown, within walking distance of the financial center, fine dining and cultural attractions, including the Teatro Colón and San Telmo.

Expensive Hotels

ETOILE HOTEL ☆☆☆☆☆
Roberto M. Ortiz 1835
☎ *4805-2626*
Fax 4805-3613
E-mail hotel@etoile.com.ar
www.etoile.ar
100 rooms, 15 floors

Despite a marked lack of notoriety, the Etoile is a very fine five-star hotel which features primarily suite-style accommodations. Perhaps the absence of advertising is what has permitted management here to keep prices below those of our earlier selections. Its Recoleta location is definitely a plus. Facilities include a modern gym, an indoor/outdoor pool, sauna, and Internet access from your room.

Although not as showy as other five-star hotels, guests here should not lack for comfort.

CARSSON HOTEL ☆☆☆☆
Viamonte 650 (between Florida and Maipú)
☎ *4322-3551*
Fax 4322-3551
100 rooms, 5 floors

Argentinean and other South Americans have come in droves over the past years to this clubby hotel located in one of the busiest parts of town. Inside, however, quiet reigns supreme and the deep red velvet and dark leather give it a handsome old world feel. Rooms are attractive and comfortably furnished. A bar, coffee shop and convenient location near Calle Florida are all the reasons you'll need to stay here.

Reserve well in advance.

BAUEN HOTEL & TOWERS ☆☆☆☆
Avenida Callao 360
☎ 4370-1600 (toll-free in Argentina 0-800-222-2836)
Fax 4372-6822
E-mail bauencom@tournet.com.ar
191 rooms and 30 suites

Parking and car rentals are available on-site.

Though larger than most, Bauen is another of Buenos Aires' fine four-star hotels which feature fully-equipped meeting facilities.

Consistent with most four-star hotels in Buenos Aires, rooms feature individually controlled heat and air conditioning, cable television, mini-bar, and a hair dryer. Connected rooms for families and groups are available. The Bauen also boasts a coffee shop, gourmet restaurant and bar. An outdoor pool complete with waterfalls provides a refreshing break from business or sightseeing during the warmer months.

GRAN HOTEL COLON ☆☆☆☆
Carlos Pellegrini 507
☎ 4320-3500
Fax 4320-3516
E-mail ghcreservas@colon-hotel.com.ar
www.colon-hotel.com.ar
183 rooms, 14 floors

If you want to stay in the heart of Buenos Aires, the Colón, right across from the obelisk on Avenida 9 de Julio, should be at the top of your list. Rooms, many facing the obelisk, are attractively furnished. The rooftop pool, though far from ostentatious, is a nice extra.

CAMBREMON HOTEL ☆☆☆☆
Suipacha 30
☎ *4345-0118*
Fax 4345-4552
E-mail cambremon@impsat1.com.ar
77 rooms

Chances are there will be a convention or meeting of some sort taking place during your stay here.

Located just one block off Avenida 9 de Julio on Suipacha, the Cambremon is one of the newest and most modern hotels in the city. It was designed primarily for business travelers and caters to business meetings and small conferences. The Cambremon's four meeting rooms are equipped with state-of-the art presentation equipment, and secretarial and translation services are available. Tastefully furnished guestrooms feature individually controlled heat and air conditioning, cable television with in-room movies, mini-bar and room safe.

The Cambremon is near the Inter-Continental.

HOTEL CRILLON ☆☆☆☆
Avenida Santa Fe 796
☎ *4310-2040 (toll-free in Argentina 0-800-8-4448)*
Fax 4310-2020
E-mail hotcri@movi.com.ar

The Crillon is a favorite of Brazilian business travelers and tourists alike. Its modern European comfort and French decor reflect its location in one of the most fashionable districts of the city. Located on the Plaza San Martín, the Crillon is just minutes away from Recoleta and the Patio Bullrich and Galerías Pacífico shopping centers, and Puerto Madero. Rooms are spacious and tastefully furnished, and business services are available.

THE GRAN HOTEL DORA ☆☆☆☆
Calle Maipú 963, near Paraguay
☎ *4312-7391*
Fax 4313-8134
100 rooms

If you want a television, you may have to request it.

The Dora is a traditional favorite whose popularity has never flagged. Many guests return time and time again, making advance reservations a necessity. All rooms have air conditioning, direct dial telephone and central heating.

The busy bar is often packed with neighborhood residents. The hotel also has a restaurant and a 24-hour snack bar. A sister hotel is recommended in Mar del Plata.

HOTEL PRESIDENTE ☆☆☆☆
Cerrito 850 (far side of 9 de Julio)
☎ *4816-2222; fax 4816-5985*
30 suites, 42 apartments with kitchenettes, 178 rooms, 18 floors

The modern Presidente is at the high end of our expensive price scale.

Furnishings here are very modern and comfortable. 24-hour room service, a gym with paddle court and sauna, and a beauty salon are the extras you'll enjoy here.

ROCHESTER HOTEL ☆☆☆☆
Esmeralda 542 | 46
☎ *4326-6076*
Fax 4322-4689
E-mail info@rochester-hotel.com.ar
www.rochester-hotel.com.ar
140 rooms

The English-style Rochester is centrally located and most of its rooms offer grand views of the busy Calle Esmeralda. Furnishings are tasteful and functionally plush.

HOTEL BRISTOL ☆☆☆☆
Cerrito 286
☎ *4382-0061*
Fax 4382-3284
130 rooms

Reasonably priced with all the standard amenities of a four-star hotel. Set on the far side of Avenida 9 de Julio, the location is splendid.

Moderate Hotels

HOSTERIA POSTA CARRETAS ☆☆☆☆
Esmeralda 726
☎ *4326-1880*
Fax 4326-2277
E-mail postcarr@prowebsrl.com
www.prowebsrl.com/postcarr
40 rooms

This beautiful country-style hotel offers rooms that are simply furnished in natural wood and earth tones to create a warm and relaxing atmosphere. Wooden beams, lanterns and russet tones make the hotel restaurant just as inviting as the hotel itself.

HOTEL CONTINENTAL ☆☆☆☆
Avenida Pte. Roque Sáenz Peña 725
☎ *4326-7741*
Fax 4322-1421
200 rooms

A lovely hotel in the *centro* area. Harmony is the byword for the service and ambience here. The deep burgundy velvet of the lobby, massive wood furnishings, brass in the elevators and

revolving doors make the Continental stand apart.

Typical Argentine entertainment is often featured in the second floor salon.

Rooms are delightful. Most have two full closets, a balcony overlooking Sáenz Peña, large bathroom, a television and mini-bar. High French windows let in plenty of bright morning light, but late sleepers needn't fret – there are heavy curtains and shutters to block out the sun.

THE HOTEL REGIDOR ☆☆☆☆
Tucumán 451
☎ *4314-9516*
100 rooms

The Regidor takes an impressive approach to decor, individualistic and more Argentinean than most other hotels in the city. There is an *estancia*-like coziness to the public areas, with murals in the breakfast room, Flanders Gobelin tapestries in the lounge, Sèvres porcelains and sculptures in the main hall, and plenty of fireplaces throughout.

Guestrooms, though not as elaborate as the public areas, do have personal touches. All are carpeted and air conditioned. Reasonable rates and a pleasant atmosphere keep this hotel popular with savvy travelers.

GRAN HOTEL BUENOS AIRES ☆☆☆☆
Marcelo T. de Alvear 767
☎ *4312-3003*
Fax 4315-2243
90 rooms, 10 floors

The location of the Gran, near the Plaza San Martín, is excellent. A tightly-run, family hotel, it has a number of impressive touches, such as the newspaper in your language which is delivered to your room every morning. Rooms are immaculate, spacious and bright, and they overlook a vine-covered courtyard.

GRAN HOTEL DEL TUCUMAN ☆☆☆☆
Tucumán 570
☎ *4393-4695*
Fax 4326-6036
90 rooms

A sparkling lobby, covered with mirrors and dramatically lit, greets you before you reach the reception desk. Service, no less bright, is terrific, thanks to a friendly and efficient staff.

Large, modern rooms are designed for convenience, with radio, telephone and light switches built right into the headboards. The color scheme is grey and white and the baths are fresh and airy.

GOLDEN TULIP HOTEL PRINCIPADO ☆☆☆☆
Paraguay 481
☎ *4313-3022*
Fax 4313-3952
www.hotelbook.com
88 rooms, 11 floors

Located on busy Calle Paraguay, this hotel offers intimate atmosphere on a street that is chock full of wonderful boutiques and shopping experiences. The Principado's decor is partly Spanish colonial and quite attractive. Rooms

The nicer rooms face the street.

are individually decorated, some a bit better than others.

HOTEL SALLES ☆☆☆☆
Cerrito 208
☎ *4382-3962*
Fax 4382-0754
100 rooms

A refined atmosphere and quiet elegance make this a popular choice of visiting scholars and scientists. Rooms, though not spectacular, are clean and nicely furnished.

Inexpensive Hotels

VICTORY HOTEL ☆☆☆
Maipú 880, near Paraguay
☎ *4314-8415*

This 10-story hotel is located near the Plaza San Martín and features a courteous staff and homey decor. All rooms are air conditioned and have direct dial telephones as well as modern bathrooms. A good value.

CASTELAR HOTEL ☆☆☆
Avenida de Mayo 1152
☎ *4383-5001*
Fax 4383-8388
E-mail castelar@hotelnet.com.ar
www.hotelnet.com.ar/hotel/castelar
200 rooms

The familiar faded splendor of the Castelar is reminiscent of Paris and Vienna. Though they have seen better days, the marble hallways and leather furniture are still elegant. Rooms are large and comfortable.

HOTEL REGIS ☆☆☆
Lavalle 813
☎ *4327-2605*
85 rooms

A fine budget choice. Rooms fill quickly so reserve ahead.

HOTEL EIBAR ☆☆☆
Florida 328, between Corrientes and Sarmiento
☎ *4325-0969*
100 rooms

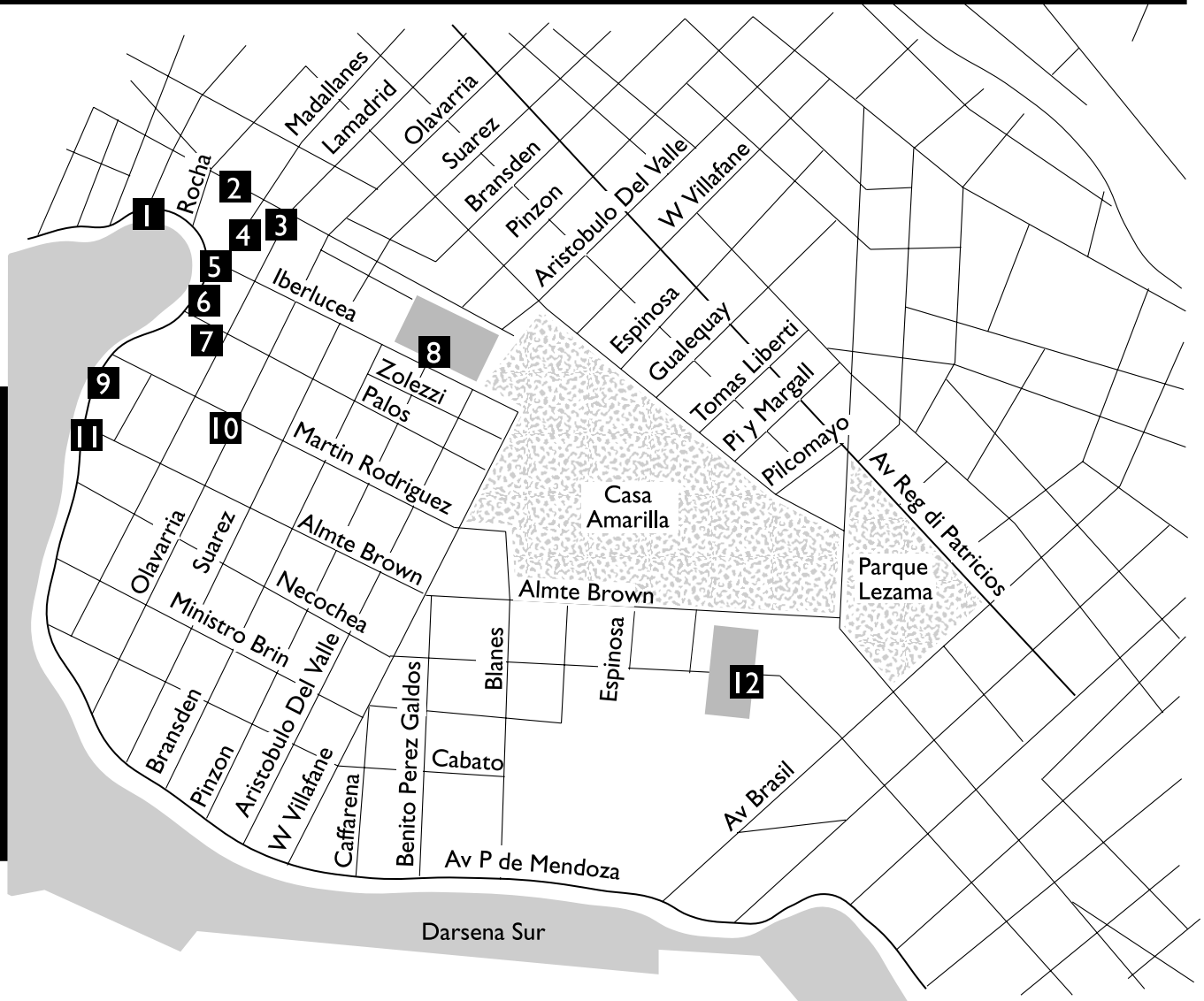
The centrally located Eibar offers modern, spacious doubles and singles. The cafeteria is more than adequate and the service is friendly and bilingual.

✻ Tip

Remember to request a room that does not face the street.

La Boca

1. Vuelta de Rocha
2. Ferias de Artes Plasticas Caminito
3. Caminito
4. Museo Bellas Artes Al Aire Libre "Caminito"
5. Museo de Cera de la Boca
6. Museo de Bellas Artes de la Boca de Artistas Argentinos
7. Teatro de la Ribera
8. Estadio de Boca
9. Buque Museo Corbeta A.R.A Uruguay
10. Parroquia San Juan Evangelista
11. Puenta Nicolas Avellaneda
12. Hospital Argerich



Best Places to Eat in Buenos Aires

Buenos Aires has a wonderful assortment of restaurants. Throughout the city are scores of exceptional eateries where first-rate food, intimate atmosphere and impeccable service make dining an event to be remembered. On an evening when your mood is far more casual, you'll find an even larger number of places where you can enjoy delicious food in informal and unconventional surroundings.

In a business that is notoriously fickle, where restaurants open to great fanfare and fade quickly, Buenos Aires boasts many that have remained popular for over 20 years.

The amalgam of people from more than a dozen different countries, each arriving with grandma's favorite recipe, has resulted in restaurants that cater to a multitude of palates. So, whether you crave ravioli, sushi or paella, you'll find a restaurant – in fact, you'll find several – to satisfy you. Steakhouses prevail, where grilled meats such as beef, lamb and pork are cooked on huge skewers over coals from local *quebracho* trees. Chunks of meat are often brought to your table on small grills that keep them hot as you eat. Beef is well-represented on restaurant menus throughout the city. Buttery soft and lower in fat than its

"Tenedor Libre" means all you can eat.

Alive Price Scale
(per person)
Expensive: $50+
Moderate: $25+
Inexpensive: under $25

US counterpart, Argentine beef has a unique flavor.

Our selections are unavoidably subjective. Nonetheless, we have done our best to present a variety of cuisines across a wide price range. Given the seemingly infinite number of dining options in Buenos Aires, pruning the list was not an easy task. We're certain you'll discover any number of great restaurants we didn't list and hope you'll write and share them with us and with the readers of the next edition of *Buenos Aires Alive*. Contact us care of Hunter Publishing, 130 Campus Drive, Edison NJ 08818.

A Note On Smoking

Buenos Aires has not enacted any laws banning smoking in restaurants. If you are looking for a totally smoke-free dining environment, your hotel room may be your best bet. However, some restaurants offer non-smoking sections. Rather than deprive yourself of some of the city's greatest pleasures, request a table in non-smoking.

Dining Hours

Whether it's a *parrillada* you're sharing with friends or a heaping plate of pasta in La Boca, dinner is practically an all-night affair. Restaurant ovens aren't even warm until 8 pm and 10 pm is prime time for families and singles alike to crowd into eateries that serve until 2 am or later.

Porteños take a "coffee break" in the late afternoon rather than in the morning. You'll find a late day snack will keep you from being famished by dinner time.

*** Tip**

Reservations, while not necessary, are a good idea, particularly on weekends.

Open seven days except where noted, most restaurants open for lunch from 12 noon until 3:30 pm and dinner from 9 pm. Brunch is popular on weekends.

Service & Tipping

Unlike many US restaurants, where service is perfunctory at best, service is taken very seriously here. Restaurant patrons are treated with respect, as if they were guests in one's home. Even inexpensive restaurants have starchy tablecloths, uniformly dressed waiters (who are almost always male) and printed menus. Some restaurants, especially steakhouses, add a service charge to the bill but an additional 10% gratuity is the norm. Other restaurants do not add a service charge and therefore you should tip as you would at home.

Confiterías & Sidewalk Cafés

European-style coffee houses or *confiterías*, many with sidewalk cafés, are located throughout the city. They are a mainstay of Buenos Aires and *porteños* frequent them at all hours of

It is not unusual to order a full course meal at an hour when most of the world would be asleep. You'll have to alter your inner clock a bit.

the day, whether it be for a quick breakfast of coffee and media lunas on the way to work, a mid-morning coffee break, afternoon tea (or cocktails), or a nightcap before heading home. You'll soon find yourself doing the same. Although individual ambience may vary, they virtually all feature small finger sandwiches, delicious croissants, pastries and beverages ranging from beer, wine and mixed drinks to exotic coffees and teas.

All the restaurants that follow accept major credit cards.

Many serve breakfast and some stay open well into the night and offer entertainment. They are most crowded in late afternoon (4-5 pm) when *porteños* take a coffee break.

✻ Tip

Our favorite way to spend an afternoon in Buenos Aires is at an outdoor café with the *Herald Tribune*, a pot of coffee and a plate of medias lunas.

Two legendary *confiterías* are the **Gran Café Tortoni**, a literary café at Avenida de Mayo 825 (see *Buenos Aires After Dark*), which is over 100 years old and was formerly a barber shop, and **Confitería Ideal** at Suipacha 384. Ideal has live music daily starting at 5 pm. Other downtown favorites include **Florida Garden** at Calle Florida 899; **Queen Bess** at Avenida Santa Fe 868; **Young Men's** at Córdoba 784; and **Del Molino** at Avenida Rivadavia 1801 near the Congress Building.

Anybody who is anybody in Buenos Aires and even wannabees head to **La Biela Café** and its neighbor **Café de la Paix**, which face each other across Avenida Quintana on the Recoleta Promenade. They are the hottest meeting and greeting places in town.

Weather permitting, choose an outdoor table.

The garden patio at the **Champs Elysées** on the Terrace of the Design Center (Plaza del Pilar) is another fine place to while away an afternoon.

The service is always formal, with tea arriving in its own pot.

In Puerto Madero, **Bahía Madero,** Av. Dávila 430, doubles as a *casa de té* (tea house) and has a small *artesanía* shop as well. At **Dock Café** you can linger over a coffee while enjoying a fine view of the port or the latest exhibit in the second-floor art gallery. **The Pier Café**, at Dock 4 (Alicia Moreau de Justo 530) is both a purveyor of coffee beans and teas from all over the world as well as a café where you can sit and enjoy your favorite blend. For a late night rendevous, consider **El Mirasol del Puerto**, Alicia Moreau de Justo 202, which features live music well into the wee hours.

Hotel Dining

The city's five-star hotels house excellent restaurants. In most cases the restaurants are run independently, such as **Tomo Uno** in the Crowne Plaza PanAmericano and **La Bourgogne** in the Alvear Palace. The most famous hotel-run restaurant in the city is the **Plaza Grill** in the Plaza Hotel. It is one of the city's most elegant dining spots and a well-

Plaza Grill serves continental food. Jacket required.

known meeting place. With that exception we have not detailed hotel restaurants on the premise that eating where *porteños* eat is more fun than eating with other visitors – but the option does exist.

Dining in Puerto Madero

A number of fine upscale eateries have opened in the converted warehouses along the waterfront promenade in Puerto Madero. Frequented at midday by executives and office workers from the nearby office towers, many cater to high rollers. Nonetheless, the setting is especially conducive to relaxed dining. At night the business crowd is replaced by families, singles and couples who stroll under the lights at a much more leisurely pace. In fact, Puerto Madero, along with Recoleta, is the place for trendy after-hours dining.

DIQUE CUATRO
Alicia Moreau de Justo 176
☎ *4315-6259*
Continental
Expensive
Open 7 days, lunch and dinner

Ambience and cuisine compete for high honors at Dique Cuatro. The elegant EATING room's promise of a sophisticated dining experience is justly fulfilled by the cuisine and service. Chef Santiago Acevedo has spared nothing to create a menu which appeals to the refined and frequently indulged tastes of his patrons, many of whom are international jet setters and top exec-

utives. Petite lobster tails with penne rigatti, lobster served with grated oysters and mushroom sauce, chicken served in a crawfish and leek timbale, and flamed tenderloins served in a green pepper and mushroom sauté are featured on the menu along with daily specials. Desserts are no less rich, and perfect for sharing. Recommendations include *Las Tres Mousses al Champagne* (dulce de leche, chocolate and champagne mousse), *tulipa de la Bonne Femme* (a delightful confection of chestnuts in syrup with kiwi), or apple crêpes topped with ice cream and caramel.

KATRINE
Alicia Moreau de Justo 138
☎ 4315-6221
Mediterranean
Expensive
Open 7 days, lunch and dinner

Katrine's culinary style recalls more of the sunny skies and kitchen gardens of the Italian Riviera and Provence than it does the fjords of her native Norway. An avid traveler, the chef's frequent sojourns provide her with a steady source of inspiration and her patrons with a menu that is constantly evolving. Though typically, salads, seafood and pasta dishes cooked with olive oil, light sauces and vegetables prevail. A delightful duck salad with currants, black linguine with smoked salmon in a light vodka sauce, and swordfish served with Mediterranean Couscous were on the menu when last we visited. Rattan furnishings and subtle

recessed lighting create a harmonious setting of cool elegance.

CABAÑA LAS LILAS
Alicia M. de Justo 516
☎ 4313-1336
Grilled meats
Expensive

Many restaurants list a variety of salad ingredients and you choose what you'd like.

Formerly located in Recoleta, Cabaña La Lilas has joined the host of other fine restaurants that have made Puerto Madero home. The owners have decorated the walls with humorous drawings of chickens, cows and pigs at play and they have extended the light touch to the floral tablecloths and napkins. The humor stops with the decor, however, because they are very serious about the fine meats served here. Owners of an *estancia* where they've bred their own cattle for 70 years, they are proud of the low fat levels and unique flavor of the beef. Start with a select-your-own-salad from the score of salad fixin's offered. Although virtually all your neighbors will be eating grilled meats, there are a number of pasta dishes on the menu as well. Dinner is served till 1 am.

CHOLILA
Alicia Moreau de Justo 102, corner of Dávila
☎ 4315-6200
Argentine-inspired International
Open 7 days, lunch and dinner
Moderate

President Clinton polished off a rib eye steak and strawberry pie here.

In a sparse, modern setting, well-suited to the end of the millenium, the internationally acclaimed Francis Mallman works his culinary

magic. The menu features an eclectic mix of traditional favorites such as *empañadas*, *salteñas*, and the master chef's rendition of the ploughman's lunch, *el lomo del albañil* – flank steak with fried potatoes and guacamole. More contemporary dishes include pumpkin gnocchi in a cheese and walnut sauce, and trout wrapped in spinach leaves with leeks and almonds. Desserts are tempting and just as inspired. Save some room for the crêpes filled with dulce de leche, the pear and almond tart served warm with a dollop of fresh ice cream, the lemon mousse with rasberry sauce, or the chocolate nemesis.

An albañil is a bricklayer or mason.

✻ Tip

Request a table by the picture windows and you'll enjoy an excellent view of the riverfront along with your meal.

PUERTO CRISTAL
Alicia M. de Justo 1082
☎ 4331-3309
Seafood
Lunch and dinner
Moderate to expensive

Sitting in the expansive dining room at Puerto Cristal with its modern recessed lighting, burnished wooden floors, and crisp white tablelinens, it's hard to imagine that this was once home to the dockworkers at Puerto Madero. Now an upscale restaurant, Puerto Cristal features a menu of exquisitely prepared seafood dishes and homemade pastas. House

specialties include the *Fritata Puerto Cristal* made with a generous array of shellfish, and the *Ñoquis Soufle de espinacas*, an innovative soufflé of gnocchi and spinach.

PUERTO SORRENTO
Alicia M. de Justo 410
☎ 4319-8733
Seafood
Lunch and dinner
Moderate to expensive

Fresh oysters and salmon blini with caviar begin the steady procession of seafood dishes you'll enjoy at Puerto Sorrento. Portions are great for sharing and may almost guarantee room for dessert. We recommend the *cazuela de mariscos* or the *crêpe de centollas con salsa de aguacates* (crêpes stuffed with crabmeat and topped with an avocado sauce) as a main course, followed by either the *espuma de limón* (lemon chiffon) or the *crêpes gelato.*

BICE
Alicia Moreau de Justo 192, corner of Dávila
☎ 4315-6216
Italian
Open 7 days, lunch and dinner
Expensive

Tiramisu for dessert is a must!

If it took a restaurant to bring a city world class standing, Bice would probably be it. More than a mere concept or theme restaurant, Bice is a classic, upscale trattoria whose branches are faithful to the high standards set by the original founded in Milan in 1926. Signature dishes such as *Tagliere di salumi all italiana, Ravioli*

di vitello come Bice New York, Filetto di manzo al barolo con prosciutto di parma e patate gratinate and *Risotto ai funghi di stagione* are prepared using ingredients flown in fresh from Italy. Bice's team of Italian-trained chefs rotate among the different locations around the world, including New York, London, Paris, Singapore, Sao Paolo, Tokyo, and, of course, Buenos Aires.

HEREFORD
Alicia M. de Justo 1140
☎ 4342-8689
Traditional steakhouse
Open 7 days, lunch and dinner
Inexpensive to moderate

Master grill chefs consider Hereford beef to be the finest in the world, both for its low fat content and texture. To live up to its name, this *parrilla* can't afford to serve anything but premium cuts of Hereford beef accompanied by a choice selection of fine Argentine wines, the freshest salads and side dishes. A promotional menu at lunchtime and comfortable surroundings make this a terrific choice for a leisurely midday meal.

Like its counterpart, the original Hereford in Costanera Norte, this fine parrilla has earned the Hereford Breeders' Association Seal of Approval.

HAPPENING DEL PUERTO
Alicia M. de Justo 310
☎ 4319-8715
International
Moderate to expensive

Despite, or because of, a location change, Happening always attracts a crowd. Grilled meats are the specialty, but the kitchen turns out other dishes too. The pastas are superb, and we

Happening was formerly in Recoleta. The original is in Costanera Norte.

recommend the fresh mozzarella to start. Happening attracts a young, upscale crowd.

TOCORORO
Alicia M. de Justo 1050
☎ 4342-6032
Cuban
Open 7 days till dawn
Inexpensive to moderate

A tocororo is a tropical bird native to Cuba, known for its brilliant plumage and its silence.

You can enjoy the real thing here, Cuban rum and a real Havana/Cuban Cigar.

In these days of light cuisine where a highly stylized presentation is often more filling to the eye than anything else, at Tocororo you'll never go hungry. This corner of Old Havana on the banks of the River Plate features Cuban comfort food at is best. *Ropa Vieja, tostones, moros y cristianos, congris...*there's nothing low-fat about the menu. As for dessert, the *flan de coco, natillas* and *dulce de papaya* are hard to pass up. Of course, you'll want to kick-off the evening with a rum cocktail (Cuban Rum of course, there's no embargoe here), and then kick up your heels till dawn to the pulsating rhytms of salsa, rumba and the chachachá.

✻ Tip

If you're looking for a quiet, intimate evening, you won't find it here.

PAQUEBOT
Alicia M. de Justo 1110, Dock 8
☎ 4342-0799
Mediterranean cuisine
Lunch and dinner
Moderate

Climbing aboard Paquebot, you'll feel as if you are about to enter a scene from *Now Voyager* or *Titanic*. Though not as opulent as the ultra-elegant oceanliners of the first half of the 20th century, the decor is reminiscent of the art deco style of the 40s and 50s. The cuisine is innovative and contemporay. We recommend the *ravioles de salmón con salsa de limón y caviar,* oysters au gratin, and *merluza negra a la plancha con papas a la crema* (grilled cod with creamed potatoes). Prices are reasonable for a restaurant of this caliber.

A paquebot, or packet-boat, is a small vessel used to carry the mail.

Dining in Recoleta

The most fashionable residential *barrio* of the city is also the mecca for those who enjoy dining well in elegant yet informal surroundings. A two-block traffic-free promenade is lined with sidewalk cafés and fine restaurants where people watching has been raised to an art form.

Informal means casual chic.

We have not listed every restaurant on the promenade. There are many others. Check the menus posted outside.

✻ Tip

Although side-by-side, these restaurants are crowded each night and it is not unusual to wait for a table at midnight.

Restaurant fare varies from Japanese to German to Continental and the decor and ambience vary enormously as well.

Favorites with Argentineans are the outdoor dining areas on the promenade that each restaurant maintains. Covered with waterproof

tarps and heated when necessary, alive with flowers and hanging lamps, these are the most sought-after locations. Diners on a tighter budget can eat in Recoleta as well. A new upscale food court (not fast food) has opened near Pilar Church.

HARPER'S
Junín 1763
☎ 4801-7140
Continental
Expensive to moderate

Harper's, a perennial Buenos Aires favorite since it opened in 1979, looks like a restaurant that would be at home in New York's Soho district. A brick wall, highly polished wooden floors and a carved oak bar where singles congregate add to the trendy ambience, as do the works of art by local artists. The food, which includes chicken sautéed with chestnuts, trout and salmon with delicate sauces as well as the house specialty *cordero del diablo* (lamb with a spicy sauce) is first rate. Start with a leafy salad and leave room for dessert, which appears at your table on a cart.

Harper's has opened a second restaurant in La Recova, (☎ 326-7343), and a third, Harper's Marine, in Punta del Este Uruguay.

LA BOURGOGNE
Ayacucho 2037 (Alvear Palace Hotel)
☎ 4805-3857
French
Expensive

Having opened a wildly successful French restaurant in Punta del Este, Uruguay in 1980, Relais Gourmand chef Jean Paul Bondoux took his show on the road and opened La Bourgogne

in Recoleta in 1993. Among the most formal and elegant dining rooms in the city, the restaurant is decorated in pastel shades with plush backed armchairs at each table and pink candles and flowers everywhere. A central table displays the special salads prepared for the day's menu as well as suggested wines. The menu changes frequently so as to use the freshest ingredients. The large shrimp with sesames, Chateaubriand with bearnaise sauce and roast duck with cassis wine sauce are excellent. Finish with a light dessert such as sorbet or fruit tart.

Less formal in decor and serving lighter food, **La Cave**, on the lower level is equally delightful. The decor features country French furniture and low ceilings with hanging wine racks and long crusty breads. Enjoy a steaming bowl of onion soup covered with melted cheese, or garlicky escargot, smoked salmon and salads. Same owners as La Bourgogne. Take-out cheeses and gourmet foods as well.

French food in less formal surroundings.

CLARK'S
Junín 1777
☎ *4801-9502*
Eclectic
Moderate

With a menu that ranges far and wide, appealing to many tastes, Clark's remains a favorite of *porteños* and visitors to the city. It usually boasts an outstanding chef (Gato Dumas worked here) and the menu and decor are carefully planned.

Clark's II (downtown) is also highly recommended.

An Edwardian ghost would surely feel at home amidst the rich wood paneling, old brass mirrored walls, stained glass and plush seating. A favorite here, the green salad with mushrooms, avocado, palm and scallions is enough for two. Loin of pork, salmon blinis and a filet mignon that needs little chewing are a few temptations. Of course, the menu changes frequently and, while you may not find the dishes above, you can be sure that what you do find will be delicious.

LOLA
Guido and Junín 1116
☎ 802-3023 or 804-5959
Continental with French leanings
Expensive

Ask for a table on the ground floor.

If a contest were held to find the city's most attractive restaurants, Lola would be at the top of many lists. Tables are widely spaced and topped by floral cloths and impeccably folded napkins. Although the dishes are continental, many lean to French and Italian. Good choices are duck with the fruit sauce of your choice or stuffed with truffles, trout with watercress in a light red wine sauce and chunks of salmon served with pasta.

✻ Tip

We recommend you eat lightly to save room for dessert. Over 30 desserts grace the menu, including a wide assortment of crêpes and chocolate mousse with nuts.

SAN BABILA
Roberto M. Ortiz 1815
☎ 4801-9444
Northern Italian
Lunch and dinner; closed Sunday evenings.
Moderate

We've never left San Bábila disappointed or hungry. The generous menu features: risotto prepared any number of ways including *milanesa*, with calamares cooked in their ink, or *a la bergamasca*; swordfish and salmon carpaccios; stracotto stuffed with polenta; panettones; and an assortment of pasta dishes too numerous to list. Typical of a neighborhood trattoria, you'll enjoy casual dining in a comfortable setting and friendly, attentive service.

MORA X
Vicente Lopez 2152
☎ 4803-0261
French
Closed Sunday
Moderate

Not on the promenade. Turn right when you pass the cemetery.

Mora X is one of the most unusual restaurants we've ever seen. It has one huge dining room on the main floor and a smaller upper level. The main room is divided into areas by wooden planters with spiky plants and the covered bar is a focal point. Although the decor is starkly modern, the food is surprisingly traditional French. Salmon mousse, terrines of vegetables and crêpes are popular choices.

LA GOMERÍA
Vicente Lopez 2134
☎ *4803-6170*
Inexpensive

Just down the street from Mora X, La Gomería draws a less trendy younger crowd who enjoy pizzas, burgers and cold beer on tap. Very large, with red lacquered walls and widely scattered tables, La Gomería is open till 6 am. There's a show nightly at 11:30 pm, usually a musical group. MTV type videos are shown on scattered TV monitors.

HENRY J. BEAN'S
Junin 1749
☎ *4801-8477*
Bar and grill
Inexpensive

Henry J. Bean's, a newly opened "saloon," offers standing room only at this writing. Serving American-style foods such as baby back ribs and great chili, apple pies and brownies, and lots of beer, Henry Bean's is drawing the young yuppie crowd. The noise level is high, especially at happy hour. Posters, old license plates and photos are the colorful decor. Light foods, lots of fun.

The Design Center/ Plaza Del Pila

Just downhill from the Cultural Center, you'll find the new art and design building where the city's finest decorators and architects have

their showrooms. Several fine restaurants have opened on the terrace.

Trendy food court. These restaurants do not close after lunch.

CAMPOS DEL PILAR
Av. Pueyrredón 2501 (The Design Center)
☎ 4806-1111, ext. 1276
Traditional Argentine steakhouse
Open 7 days, lunch and dinner.
Moderate

At Campos del Pilar you'll dine *estancia*-style in the heart of the city's most fashionable district. Waiters dressed as *gauchos* attend to your needs as fine Argentine beef, suckling pig and young goat sizzle over the glowing coals of the *parrilla*. Specialties include *brochettes de lomo y mollejas* (tenderloin and sweetbread brochettes), *matambrito de cerdo al roquefort* (tender pork plate with Roquefort), and *chivito y lechón al asador* (young goat and suckling pig roasted over an open flame). All are accompanied by roasted potatoes served with six different sauces, a fresh salad bar and a select assortment of wines from the finest bodegas in the country.

CARUSO
Av. Pueyrredón 2501 (The Design Center)
☎ 4806-3299
Italian
Open 7 days, lunch and dinner.
Moderate to expensive

In a recent review, one of Buenos Aires' foremost restaurant critics noted that Caruso just keeps getting better. Menu offerings range from traditional Italian favorites to more inno-

vative dishes such as ravioli filled with wild artichoke and *fusilli scarparo*. Dine indoors or on the terrace.

HARD ROCK CAFÉ
Av. Pueyrredón 2501, 2nd Floor
(The Design Center)
☎ *4807-ROCK (7625)*
North American
Open 7 days, lunch and dinner
Moderate

This Hard Rock has everything in common with its counterparts around the world. No surprises here except for a few Argentine touches such as the "crepas" with dulce de leche, nuts and ice cream.

For Lighter Fare

The ground floor of the Design Center also houses a dozen restaurants which serve lighter fare than those listed previously. Less expensive, they draw a younger and family-oriented crowd. Open for lunch and dinner every day, the restaurants offer several dining options. Each has indoor tables and arcade-covered dining areas, and they all share an open-air terrace. All have waiter service but some allow you to select and pay for your food and carry it to the outdoor tables. Among our favorites, **Molière Café** is a charming *confitería* serving sandwiches, pastries and drinks. **Romanaccio** serves pizzas with all manner of toppings and pasta. It has a salad cart (waiter-served). **Fishy Bar,** part of a local chain, lets you select

your fish platter or paella and take it to a nearby table. **Munich del Pilar** serves German specialties and **Rix Café** whips up luscious crêpes. Good food here and a nice area to spend a low-key evening.

Downtown Dining

The sights and sounds of "downtown" Buenos Aires will be familiar to those of you who live in a big city. There are streets crowded with smartly dressed working people rushing to their offices, lots of cars, buses and taxis and well-stocked stores filled with shoppers. Here too are the historic areas of the city. The city fathers have attempted to make the area people-friendly. The major shopping street, Calle Florida, is a pedestrian promenade, as is Calle Lavalle, where many cinemas and restaurants are found. You'll spend many of your Buenos Aires days and nights here. Restaurants run the gamut from among the city's finest to fast-food stops and everything in between. You can dine well and inexpensively in the area.

Restaurants accept major credit cards and many stay open all afternoon.

TOMO I
Carlos Pellegrini 525
(Crowne Plaza Panamericano Hotel)
☎ *4326-6310*
Italian/Continental
Lunch served weekdays only; closed Sunday
Expensive

For over 20 years Ada Cancaro and her sister Ebe operated their splendid Tomo I restaurant from an elegant brownstone setting on Calle

Las Heras, but in 1993 they decided to move to a more modern setting in the Panamericano Hotel. The move has been successful and it hasn't hurt the food one bit.

While the names of the continental and Italian dishes will be familiar to you, each will have an unusual ingredient or seasoning that makes it special. The ravioli stuffed with spinach is served with either a tomato-based sauce or a buttery one. Pasta dishes include olives, shrimp, anchovies and vegetables in their sauces. Chicken with huge mushrooms, lamb with herbs and sliced sweet and sour pork dishes are all lightly sauced. There is a fixed-price menu (different at lunch and dinner), which includes an appetizer, main course, wine and coffee.

Service here is exemplary.

CATALINAS
Reconquista 875
☎ *4313-0182*
Brit-style French cuisine
Expensive

Calle Reconquista in the Retiro section of downtown is crowded during the day with executives who work in this busy area. So, it is no surprise that Catalinas is a popular lunch spot. Many an important deal has been discussed and closed over the seafood specialties here. What is a surprise and a distinct credit to the terrific food, conceived and prepared under the direction of Chef Ramiro Rodriguez Pardo, is that Catalinas is also very crowded at night when the area is quiet. The ambience is British, with

fine Villeroy and Bach table settings, linen cloths and several antique chandeliers. Of the two dining areas, we prefer the lower level.

The terrine of salmon is superb. The *sopa del mar,* seafood soup, features crabmeat, lobster chunks, tender mussels and fish from the Paraná River in a light cream sauce. The *steak Tiber de queso atuel con tomate y albahaca fresca* (steak with cheese, tomato and fresh basil) is a tasty alternative for landlubbers. Prix-fixe menus are available.

LONDON GRILL
Reconquista 455
☎ 4311-2223
British
Noon-midnight, daily
Inexpensive

British in style and cuisine.

The London Grill is the most popular British eatery in a city with many Brits. This was one of Borges' favorite haunts – the blind poet savored classical English cuisine just as locals do here today. Turkey, leg of lamb and roast beef with Yorkshire pudding are specialties at the grill. Britain puts its best foot forward with this warmly inviting pub. There is an oyster bar here as well.

Another popular British pub, **Downtown Matias** is at 979 San Martín (☎ 312-9844). Specialties here are the hot chicken curry and the steak and kidney pies. Closed weekends.

LA ESTANCIA
Lavalle 941 (near Avenida 9 de Julio)
☎ 4326-0330
Grilled meats
Open daily, noon-3 am (less crowded at lunch)
Inexpensive

La Estancia has become a legend for the leagues of people that have been well-fed at these tables. Its location on Lavalle, in the hub of the downtown area, makes it a mecca for tourists, but that shouldn't deter you. Its stellar reputation is well-deserved and, in spite of many tourists, the majority of your fellow diners are *porteños*. The quality and freshness of the meat is unsurpassed and, as you wait on line for a table on a busy night along with many other hungry people, you can watch the gaucho-clad chefs preparing meats over wood-burning fires in the front windows. Although the tables are close together and the waiters have large sections to serve, they manage to provide friendly service. The *parrilladas* which are most popular are served sizzling and are enormous.

CLARKS II
Sarmiento 645
☎ 4325-1960
Continental
Closed weekends
Moderate

This sister restaurant to Clarks of Recoleta is even more attractive. Located in what was once a fashionable tailor shop, it was converted into

its present day elegance in 1978. Much of the original decor was preserved, such as the original wood paneling and stained glass. The antique bar is a real eyeful. Popular dishes include the *asado*, grilled salmon and glazed duckling. The house specialty is a buttery cut of beef encrusted by a crispy shell. You can also select lighter fare.

ZUM EDELWEISS
Calle Libertad 431
☎ 4382-3351
German and traditional Argentine cuisine
Noon-6 am daily
Inexpensive

Weiner Schnitzel anyone? If you enjoy such German specialties as *choucroute garni, eisbein* (pigs knuckles), or *leberwurst with pickles*, head to this attractive restaurant, a favorite among theater people, performers and spectators alike. It's a short two blocks from the Teatro Colón. Do try their dessert pancakes. They're delicious.

Another German-style eaterie, Otto is at Sarmiento 1679.

ROMA PIZZERIA
Lavalle 888
No credit cards
Inexpensive

Roma's huge dining room is always crowded but particularly so at lunch and after the last show at the nearby cinemas. There is waiter service at the tables and counter service in the front. Roma has the best and least expensive *empañadas* in the city. One *empañada*, its crusty dough stuffed with ground beef, ham

and cheese or chicken chunks, is enough for lunch. Also terrific are the pizzas, which are served by the slice at the counter and by the pie at the tables. Toppings include anchovies, ham, onions and olives.

LAS NAZARENAS
Reconquista 1132
☎ 4312-5559
Grilled meats
Open noon-2 am daily
Inexpensive

Especially attractive if you are staying at the Sheraton or Plaza Hotels, this restaurant is a brisk walk from the center of town. A two-story colonial-style building, it is easily recognized by the cheery flags that hang from its exterior. The interior is cheerful as well, with bright yellow walls and matching cloths, hanging chandeliers and green plants everywhere. Las Nazarenas' high quality *parrilladas*, *bife de lomo*, brochettes and special salads are enough to lure all discriminating tastebuds. The beef in particular is always superlative.

EL PALACIO DE LA PAPA FRITA
Lavalle 735, ☎ 4393-5849
Lavalle 954, ☎ 4322-1599
Corrientes 1612, ☎ 4374-8063
Inexpensive

Don't let the silly name of these sister restaurants turn you off. "The Palace of the Fried Potato" delivers the goods. Friendly service, market fresh ingredients, a large selection of entrées and generous portions aptly comple-

ment the trademark "papas." Definitely not commonplace, those spuds are prepared in a special way which has taken years to perfect. Equally outstanding is the *papas souflé.* All of the chicken dishes are excellent and you may appreciate the switch from beef.

✻ Tip

Try the chicken Valenciana with a salad. Simply roasted in its own juices with herbs – it was perfect.

And don't miss the flaming desserts. The waiter will happily flambé cherries, bananas, or any other seasonal fruit right at the table, and serve it to you warm in a silver bowl.

BROCCOLINO
Esmeralda 776, corner of Suipacha
☎ *4322-9848*
Italian
No credit cards
Inexpensive

Broccolino, a family-owned restaurant, would be just as at home in Naples as it would in its namesake, Brooklyn, New York. Red checkered tablecloths, wine bottles and posters provide the decor. The pizza is superb and is a favorite of Argentine families. There are many pasta dishes as well. The sauces are red and hearty.

In true Italian style, a bottle of Grappa is placed on your table at the end of the meal.

YING YANG
Paraguay 8958
☎ 4311-7798
Natural foods
Breakfast and lunch only; closed Sundays
No credit cards
Inexpensive

Yes Virginia! some *porteños* eat brown rice, vegetable pies, fresh salads and fish. Many of them head to Ying Yang, which serves natural foods in its small restaurant and is a popular take-out choice as well.

EL IMPARCIAL
Hipolito Yrigoyen 1201
☎ 4383-2919
Spanish
Inexpensive

Friends tell us that El Imparcial is the oldest restaurant in Buenos Aires, having opened in 1860 – yes 1860! It must be doing something right and, since there is no decor to speak of, it must be the food. Spanish specialties include paellas with shellfish and a spicy *arroz con mariscos* that has chunks of shrimp and mussels. There are meat dishes on the menu as well.

These restaurants are near the Plaza del Congreso.

EL GLOBO
Calle Salta 98
☎ 4381-2926
Spanish
Inexpensive

A virtual newcomer, having been here only since 1908, El Globo is another eatery serving

Spanish specialties. Serrano ham is always on the menu and the paellas and *pucheros* (hearty soups) are very popular.

Fast Food/Light Dining

Fusion Café at Tucumán 839 is a comfortable restaurant where you can enjoy breakfast and lunch. They offer breakfast specials and fresh salads and sandwiches at lunch. **Bonpler**, Calle Florida 491, serves French-style fast food, which means that sandwiches arrive on croissants or baguettes and there is always hot onion soup. **Quick**, Calle Florida 130, is similar. **Pumper-nic** has branches on Calle Florida 532 and elsewhere in the city. Burgers are the best selling item here, but **McDonald's** has become even more popular and ubiquitous, with branches throughout the city. The menu is familiar but many have salad carts where you select items and a waiter serves them to you. Sold by weight. **La Lecherísima**, which serves such items as yogurt, fresh fruits and cereals, are also scattered all over town. Two convenient locations are at Avenida Corrientes 839 and Avenida Santa Fe 726.

Barrio Norte "Sud"

The up-and-coming near north side.

The restaurants that follow are slightly off the beaten track and not centered around a specific site, Though you may not be able to walk from one to the other easily, they are all within walking distance of downtown and/or Recoleta. The heart of the area we've dubbed "Northern Bar-

rio-South" is Avenida Callao where it joins Santa Fe, Arenales and Juncal. Lots of cinemas and shops are here and the main streets are alive with people well into the night. The area is up and coming, with lots of new buildings and renovated ones. It reminds us of Soho in New York and the Gaslight District of San Diego. Restaurants are informal, as is the dress code.

AU BEC FIN
Vicente Lopez 1825
☎ *4801-6894*
French
Lunch and dinner
Expensive

Au Bec Fin is neither a newcomer on the city dining scene nor trendy and informal. It is, however, the top dining spot in this area, particularly if you enjoy French food. The restaurant occupies all three floors of what was an elegant home in the 1920s. It changed hands several times until Au Bec Fin opened in 1983. There are several dining rooms, some so small that they only hold three or four tables. The dim lighting, elegant tableware and relative privacy makes Au Bec Fin a romantic dining experience. Friends raved about the mousse, which is made with shrimp or liver. The fish dishes are terrific and not heavily sauced and the beef is stuffed with mushrooms and other ingredients.

They offer a four-course price-fixed dinner.

BANANA
Ayacucho 1425
☎ 4812-6321
Pizza
Closed for lunch; open till 2 am nightly
Moderate to inexpensive

A wild and crazy place.

As you step over the threshold of this contemporary restaurant you'll feel as if you've landed in an exotic Amazon village. The large, vividly painted room is filled with palm trees and lots of hanging fruit – particularly (you guessed it) bananas. You expect Tarzan to plop down on your table at any point. If you are anticipating wild boar steaks or piranha stew, guess again. Banana is a pizzeria and the pizza is terrific. Topped by all kinds of ingredients, it arrives with cheese and bubbling hot. Pastas are also served. The atmosphere is noisy with people and live music that starts at 10:30 pm.

Perfect for after theater or a movie.

A second Banana has opened in Coconor at the corner of Rafael Obligado and Pampa Costanera Norte.

Its upstairs partner, **Como** (on the second level) has exposed brick walls and deep blue cloths on widely spaced tables. It looks like a converted loft. It too serves pizza and pastas, but the larger menu includes salads, carpaccio and ribs. Enter through the door to the right of Banana.

LOS INMORTALES
Callao 1165
Pizza
Inexpensive

Largest branch is at Calle Lavalle 746.

The Lavalle branch of this near-elegant pizzeria has been an institution in Buenos Aires for years, as the photos of the V.I.P. patrons attest.

The Callao branch is less crowded and more comfortable, with its leather-backed settees and director's chairs. Menus are the same; steak and chicken dishes join a list of over 50 different pizza choices. The *empañadas*, another house specialty, are large and crusty. Either branch (and there are others) is fine to eat in.

LA ESQUINA DE LAS FLORES
Avenida Córdoba 1587
Natural foods
Inexpensive

As you approach this "Corner of Flowers" and spot the vividly painted exterior with red, blue and yellow flowers it seems natural that it serves healthy foods. The foods, freshly made on the premises, change daily, but you'll often find vegetable lasagna, vegetable and cheese stuffed *empañadas*, pizzas and pastas, plus a help-yourself salad and fruit bar. There's a take-out store and bakery as well. The interior is very basic, with weathered tables and chairs and worn linoleum. The food's the thing here.

RODIZIO BARRIO NORTE
Avenida Callao 1292
☎ *4814-1776*
Brazilian steakhouse
Moderate

Rodizio is a Brazilian-style steakhouse where the waiters meander through the restaurant with grilled meats on large sword-like skewers. They stop at each table and carve whatever you desire. You'll sample different cuts of beef,

lamb, pork, chicken and a variety of sausages. The waiters will keep it coming until you beg for mercy. The meal is fixed-price. The restaurant itself is sprawling and has several dining rooms, all with whitewashed walls, floral prints and Brazilian cowboy gear.

Other rodizios are located in Puerto Madero (☎ 4334-3638) and Costanera Norte (☎ 4788-4217).

Dining in La Recova

PIEGARI
Posadas 1042
☎ 4326-9654
Italian
Lunch and dinner; closed Monday lunch.
Moderate to expensive

Modern in decor, with light woods and recessed lighting. One large dining room is divided into three serving areas by wooden banquettes. A bar area is at center stage. Traditional Italian cuisine served with an innovative flair. Specialties include *creppe rellenas con centolla* (crêpes stuffed with spider crab), seafood dishes served with subtly flavored sauces, pasta dishes and brickoven pizza. You'll be greeted with a glass of champagne. Can you think of a better way to start an evening?

These restaurants are in the Calle Posadas Arcade.

HARRY CIPRIANI
Posadas 1229
☎ 4813-4291
Italian
Lunch and dinner
Moderate to expensive

Having put his name above the door of this elegant trattoria, internationally known restau-

ranteur Harry Cipriani demands nothing but the best for his patrons. The finest indgredients and painstaking care go into the preparation of every dish. The *costoletta alla milanesa* and *cannelloni de magro con zucchini* won high accolades from a respected retaurant critic during a visit, and the rest of the menu is certain to follow suit. Mr. Cipriani has another restaurant downtown, **Cipriani Dolci**, at Del Libertador 750, as well as two restaurants in Venice, Italy and two in New York.

Reservations are advised. Free parking is available next door at Patio Bullrich.

HARPER'S
Posadas 1053
☎ *4326-7343*
Continental
Expensive to moderate

Harper's has been a perennial Buenos Aires favorite since it opened in 1979. Unlike movie sequels which pale in comparison to the original, this second Harper's leaves nothing to be desired. Decor, presentation and service all meet the standards set by the original.

EL MIRASOL DE LA RECOVA
Posadas 1032
☎ *4326-7322*
Argentinean
Moderate

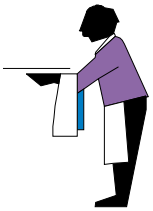
Grilled meats, *empañadas* and other Argentinean specialties are served in this informal eaterie, which is down a few steps from the main floor of the arcade. Outdoor tables.

DIXIE DINER
Avenida Libertador and Carlos Pellegrini
☎ *4807-0703*
North American
Open 7 days, breakfast, lunch and dinner
Inexpensive

The 1950s diner is an American classic that will never fade. Instead, it is constantly reincarnated without ever taking on a different persona. It is a faithful reproduction, from the booths to the chrome counter with bar stools, and even the menu is all American. Order a greasy burger with fries or onion rings and a shake. We did notice one variation on this popular theme. There's an espresso maker behind the counter.

There is another Dixie Diner in Costanera Norte.

The Carritos of Costanera Norte



Costanera Norte is a waterfront promenade that runs along the River Plate. At different points en route, run-down dock areas have been converted into shopping malls, modern sports facilities and private clubs. River Plate Stadium and Aeroparque Jorge Newbury are in this area, but the most notable attractions are the *carritos* that line a stretch of one inlet, Avenida Rafael Obligado. The *carritos* of today are popular restaurants that serve Italian, *parrilla* and seafood specialties.

Carritos

The name *carrito* originated several decades ago when this area was largely unpopulated. On weekends, when *porteños* came here to fish or enjoy the waterfront, the only food to be had was supplied by the men in horse-drawn carriages (*carritos*) who sold sausages and sandwiches.

Unlike their predecessors, the restaurants here tend to be quite expansive. Located one alongside the other, they are filled with talk, laughter, music and large family groups – particularly on weekends. You can "*carrito* hop" and pick the one that most appeals to you, but be prepared to wait for a table.

It is best to reserve ahead, especially on weekends.

A Nonna Immaculata (☎ 4782-1751) on Rafael Obligado is the "grandmother of all *carritos*," with two huge dining rooms and walls lined with old family photos. Noisy and a lot of fun, it specializes in Italian food. There's live music and comedy shows on Friday and Saturday nights. *Moderate.*

Look (☎ 4783-1375), also on Rafael Obligado, is hard to miss. Renowned chef Pedro Muñoz has taken the *parrilla* to new heights, and added original dishes along the way. Excellent service, original decor and brilliant cuisine have made Look a Costanera Norte favorite since 1981.

Hereford (☎ 4782-7447) also specializes in grilled meats. It has two levels, but ask to sit downstairs. Decor is *estancia*-style. *Moderate.* Another Hereford has opened in Puerto Madero at Av. A. Moreau de Justo 1140 (☎ 4342-7534).

Happening (☎ 4787-0666) is the most attractive restaurant on the strip, with leather chairs and lots of hanging plants. A rear walkway opens onto a garden and an outdoor terrace overlooking the water. Very popular. Grilled meats and fish. Good food. *Moderate.*

El Padrino (☎ 4781-4110) is quite modern looking with low whitewashed ceilings and exposed wooden beams. It serves both grilled meats and pastas. *Moderate.*

Los Años Locos (☎ 4784-8681) has a huge cold buffet with both meats and salads. They also serve hot grilled meats. Young lively crowd. *Moderate.*

Gardiner (☎ 4788-0437) is not a typical *carrito*. It is dimly lit and starkly modern in decor. It has an eclectic menu offering mixed salads, pastas, grilled fish and meats and special dishes such as *cordero Patagónico* (Patagonian lamb). *Moderate.*

Dining in San Telmo

For lunch stops around Plaza Dorrego see the "Exploring San Telmo" section in "Dawn to Dusk." The restaurants that follow are ideal for a night on the town. You can have dinner and enjoy the show at El Viejo Almacén, or have

dinner and then kick up your own heels at a tanguería.

EL VIEJO ALMACÉN
Corner of Av. Independencia with Balcarce
☎ 4307-7388
Continental
Dinner only; closed Sunday
Expensive

Shows Monday through Sunday at 9:30 pm; Friday and Saturday at 11:45 pm.

After closing its doors for several years, El Viejo Almacén had reopened on our last visit.

Many a *porteño* will tell you that you haven't truly experienced Buenos Aires until you've spent an evening at El Viejo Almacén. We have to agree. Declared a cultural landmark, the city's most legendary tango artists, dancers and musicians, have performed here and continue to do so today. Fine continental cuisine is featured on the menu, but the real reason to come here is for the show.

MOLIERE
Chile 299, corner of Balcarce
☎ 4343-2623
International
Inexpensive to moderate
Tango shows several nights a week (call in advance)

At the time of our last visit, Moliere was offering a promotional menu for just $9. There is another Moliere in Barrio Norte.

If you can't fit El Viejo Almacén into your budget, Moliere is a fine alternative. For ambience and decor, Moliere runs a close second. In fact, we wouldn't be surprised if it were modeled after its older counterpart. As they say, imitation is the highest form of flattery.

✻ Tip

For the best view of the show, request a table upstairs.

LA CONVENCION DE SAN TELMO
Carlos Calvo 375
☎ 4300-9246
Continental/French
Lunch and dinner; closed Sunday evenings.
Tango show nightly
Expensive

Even as we enter the next millenium, La Convención remains faithful to 19th-century Buenos Aires. Set in a restored mansion which dates back to 1870, the decor features antiques and furnishings characteristic of the turn of the century. Black and white photos of old Buenos Aires and of famous tango performers help to set the mood. The menu is simple. The roast chicken and fine herbs, the steak with pommes frites, and the trout sautéed in a black butter sauce with capers are highly recommended. You'll also find a fine selection of salads and lighter fare. Come in the evening for the Tango Show or at lunchtime when local politicians and business people engage in a dance of their own.

ANTIGUA TASCA DE CUCHILLEROS
Carlos Calvo 319
☎ 4307-0594
Grilled meats
Lunch 12 noon-4:30 pm daily; dinner 8 pm-2 am except Sunday
Inexpensive

The building has been declared a national monument.

Here's your chance to enjoy traditional Argentine *parrillada* in a typical Argentine colonial building. The restaurant menu, which gives the history of the building, says it was built in 1789. Today it has several dining areas and an outdoor patio. The whitewashed walls and graceful archways give it an open, airy look. Grilled meats are the main attraction, but there are pastas and such dishes as chicken cazuela, which is closely akin to cacciatore. Pleasant dining.

LA CASA DE ESTEBAN DE LUCA
Defensa 1000
☎ *4361-4338*
Inexpensive

Sort of a saloon/restaurant, this is also in a historic building which was reputedly an arms factory. The bar is popular here and the food leans to burgers, omelettes and salads. Good for lunch and pre-tango show dinner, but not for an entire evening.

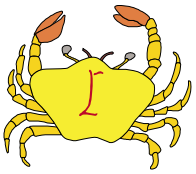
TABERNA BASKA
Chile 980
☎ *4334-0903*
Lunch and dinner; closed Sunday evenings and all day Monday
Moderate

Although they have been part of Spain for centuries, the northern Basque provinces continue to fight for their independence. Their foods are quite different from those served in traditional Spanish restaurants and they use lots of garlic as well as unusual shellfish and squid. Basque

food is popular in Buenos Aires and if you'd like to sample some you should head to Taberna Baska (Basque Tavern). It serves the best known dishes and is very old world in decor.

Another Basque eatery nearby with many of the same dishes is **Laurek Bat** at Belgrano 1144 (☎ 381-0682). No credit cards here.

Dining in La Boca



Hearty foods, Southern Italian style, are served in generous portions at La Boca's *cantinas*. Best known for the singing, dancing and fun, the food is secondary. All the *cantinas* are on Necochea Street and you can easily walk from one to another. **Il Piccolo Vapore** (Neocochea 1190) serves good pastas, while **Spaddevecchio** is favored by tour groups. Other choices include **La Fragata, Gaviotta** and **Tres Amigos.** All are reasonably priced.

Dining in the Suburbs

If you'd like to visit a Buenos Aires suburb or want to stay for dinner after the races and enjoy a fabulous meal, head out to the legendary **Avenida Dardo Rocha** in the Martínez area opposite the San Isidro Racetrack.

Reservations recommended.

There are two restaurants that are packed with locals, attesting to the excellent fare. Expect to wait a bit for a table, particularly on weekends.

Most popular is the **Rosa Negra**, Dardo Rocha 1918 at the corner of La Paz (☎ 4717-2685). It is expensive. A spectacular bar area, similar to

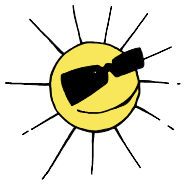
that at Harper's, separates the two dining rooms accented by red brick walls and tile floors. Valet parking is available. Also considered a "must" by residents is **La Candelaría** at Dardo Rocha 1810 (☎ 4792-2207). Rich wood decor and a vaulted ceiling create a lovely setting for an evening after the races.

For good *parrillada,* try **La Herradura**, Dardo Rocha 1260 (☎ 4798-5962).

✻ Tip

A cab should cost about $15 US each way and will take you through all the suburbs in about half an hour. You can also take the Bartolomé Mitre Railroad from El Retiro Station to Acassuso and hop a cab to the restaurant of your choice.

Buenos Aires
Dawn to Dusk



At their core, most capital cities in South America are Spanish colonial. Not so here. Buenos Aires has a decidedly modern European flavor – so much so that it has often been called "the Paris of the Americas." It's easy to see why. The city has wide tree-lined boulevards and cobblestoned promenades. It has flower stalls, sidewalk cafés and lots of bookstores. A soaring obelisk is its Eiffel Tower and while a river doesn't run through it, the Río Plata is always nearby. Strolling along, you'll notice traces of British, Portuguese and Italian styles of architecture, as well as clear adaptations from the French Renaissance. The inner city is composed of distinctive *barrios* (neighborhoods), each adding a unique flavor to the whole. Fine museums, excellent restaurants, chic shops and open-air fairs are not clustered in one area but can be found in each key *barrio*.

You'll want to explore the city on foot. It is a veritable walker's paradise since it is quite flat and has small plazas where you can rest. But with lots of new construction and underground cables being laid to modernize the telephone, television and transportation systems, the sidewalks are badly broken. Repairs have not caught up. Stay alert!

Citywide Pleasures

Whether you are a dedicated shopper or an indifferent one, you will enjoy browsing along Calle Florida, Avenida Santa Fe and the attractive shopping malls where the *porteños* spend their pesos. It will take plenty of willpower not to walk away with a stunning leather coat or designer handbag. Those readers who love a bargain will enjoy *Once*, a small shopping area akin to New York's Orchard Street, where haggling is an art form.

Sports enthusiasts can play squash, tennis or golf, and, weather permitting, can even sail or windsurf near town. Argentines are great sportsmen and spectator sports take place at a high level. Tennis matches, horseracing, polo and "pato" matches, as well as soccer games are always scheduled. Soccer, called *fútbol,* is a national passion. Try to see a game while you're here.

Pato (duck) is a game resembling basketball on horseback!

"Noshing" is another part of a Buenos Aires day. You'll be duly tempted by *empañadas*, *panchos* with "the works," and especially the scores of *confiterías* (coffee houses) displaying delicious pastries, finger sandwiches, teas and coffees. With dinner usually eaten after 9 pm, you can indulge yourself in the afternoon and still be hungry for dinner.

The city hosts special events each month, such as international book fairs, art exhibits, polo championships, Davis Cup tennis matches, and scores of concerts and performances. Most are

listed in the *Buenos Aires Herald*. And the concierge at your hotel should be able to advise you of them if you inquire.

Buenos Aires is a sophisticated, cosmopolitan city with a wide range of activities. Enjoy!

Exploring Downtown

Plaza De Mayo

A good place to start is the Plaza de Mayo, an attractive tree-lined oasis in the heart of downtown Buenos Aires and the historical heart of the city. As previously noted (see *History*), the city was founded twice. A tiny settlement was started early in the 16th century by a Spanish explorer, Pedro de Mendoza. He named it "Puerto de Nuestra Señora de la Santísima Trinidad y Ciudad de Nuestra Señora de Santa María de los Buenos Aires." Quite a mouthful! Eventually the name was whittled down to Buenos Aires or "Good Breezes." Mendoza had promised to honor the Virgin (she is the patron saint of navigators) if the ships in his fleet were brought safely to shore. Mendoza and his men moved on and it wasn't until 1580 that the city you see today was founded. Juan de Garay marked off a square section of land and called it the Plaza Mayor. Around the square he designated areas for the *Cabildo* (Town Hall) a church and a fort. Houses for the 63 people who had accompanied Garay took up the rest of the space. Adjoining the square, a Jesuit mission was established, as was a military garrison.

A wall of this fort has been unearthed and can be seen behind the Casa Rosada.

Garay's Plaza Mayor did not immediately flourish – for years it served as a market place, a bullfight arena and even the site of a gallows. The church he envisioned was started a half-dozen times to no avail and today's Cathedral was not begun until the late 17th century. The fort on the eastern flank of the plaza was never attacked and gradually fell into disrepair. In 1880 it was replaced by the stunning **Casa Rosada** (Pink House), which you can visit. **The Cabildo** (Old Town Hall) is the only building still standing that had its origins in Garay's time.

Many important events in Argentina's history have been played out in this plaza. In 1806 it was the site of a fierce battle between British forces and local soldiers during the British attempt to wrest control of the city from the Spanish. It was also here that the local junta formed the nation's first native government on May 25, 1810. This event gave the Plaza its current name – Plaza of Mayo.

Plaza de Mayo has served as a public podium for people expressing their opinions and an arena for demonstrations, both organized and spontaneous. In recent years, it has seen the anguish of the "Madres de la Plaza de Mayo," a group of women wearing white kerchiefs who march around the square every Thursday with photographs of their lost children pinned to their chests. These children are among the *desaparecidos (*the disappeared ones), who vanished during the years of military oppression

and The Dirty War (see page 29 for the full story). You will never forget the sight of these women silently gathered to remind everyone of their lost loved ones. Other demonstrations at the Plaza are often noisy, helped along by large bass drums and loudspeakers or megaphones.

As you relax on one of the benches or stroll around the plaza, be sure to take note of its two monuments. The original **Piramide de Mayo**, constructed of wood and plaster, dates back to May, 1811, when it was unveiled to commemorate the first anniversary of the May Revolution. After several restorations, it was moved to its current position at the center of the plaza in 1912. An equestrian statue of Manuel Belgrano, creator of the Argentine flag and a hero of her independence fight, stands in front of the Casa Rosada.

Look for the soldiers on horseback in the Plaza. They wear the same colorful uniforms worn by San Martín's regiment in the war for freedom from Spain.

Though dominated by banks and office buildings, the Plaza is still home to three historic buildings that are open to the public. They are the **Casa Rosada,** the **Metropolitan Cathedral,** and the **Cabildo.**

The **Casa Rosada** (so named for its pinkish hue) was built between 1873 and 1894 on the site that was originally a fort as well as the city's Customs House and Post Office. Today it is home to the executive branch of the government and is often referred to as the *Casa de Gobierno.*

The Pink House serves the same purpose as the White House in Washington DC.

Pretty in Pink

Ask a *porteño* about the Casa's pink color and you'll hear quite a story. It seems that in the last century, following the Civil War of the Federal and Unitario Parties, President Sarmiento issued the decree that the colors of each party be blended as a symbol of cooperation. The colors were red and white, hence the rosy blush of the Casa Rosada.

Take a close look at the ornate first-floor balcony and nearby portico with red geraniums blooming in every niche. The Peróns stood here often, stirring the masses with their nationalistic rhetoric. One memorable rally took place in 1945. Organized by Eva Perón, it was designed to protest her husband's incarceration. It succeeded. The Peronistas were bombed at a giant rally held here in 1955 while protesting the ousting of Juan Perón. It was from this balcony that President Galtieri announced the invasion of the Malvinas/Falkland Islands in 1982. He reappeared only a few months later to admit defeat – just a few days before resigning from power.

The Lowering of the Flag at 7 pm each night is fun to watch, as is the Changing of the Guard by the colorfully clad Grenaderos every other Saturday at 11 am. Lots of pomp!

The many palms trees and fountains in the patios around the Casa Rosada create a tropical feel while providing cool shade and an inviting place to stop. By the way, the Casa Rosada has a small but choice museum which you enter

from Hipolito Yrigoyan 211. Admission is free on Saturday; it is closed on Wednesday.

If you continue around to the back of the Casa Rosada, you'll see **Parque Colón**, where there is an exquisite sculpture of Christopher Columbus by the Italian sculptor Arnoldo Zocchi.

The **Banco de La Nación Argentina**, on Avenida Rivadavia facing the Plaza, houses a Numismatic Museum. The first Teatro Colón once occupied this spot.

You'll easily recognize the **Metropolitan Cathedral** if you look for the oversized torch to the right of the main entrance. It remains lit at all times and honors Argentina's most revered national hero who lies buried within, General José de San Martín. The very first chapel in Buenos Aires stood here in 1585. By 1622, after several failed attempts, the site was consecrated and construction began. It wasn't actually completed until 1791, and even then the portico would not be constructed for another 30 years. By that time Argentina had moved from the Spanish-dominated colonial period to the more French-inspired period of Enlightenment following the May Revolution. Two Frenchmen, Prosper Catelin and Pierre Benoit, were chosen to design the portico and are responsible for the row of 12 Corinthian columns. Resting above the columns is a sculpture pediment by Joseph Dubourdieu entitled "Jacob meets his son Joseph in hands of Egypt." It represents the reconciliation between Buenos Aires and the provinces.

Visitors to the church will not be admitted if they are wearing shorts, mini-skirts or other clothing deemed inappropriate by the guards.

The cathedral is a treasure trove of historical riches, with Spanish mosaic floors, a barrel vaulted ceiling and five naves of Renaissance design that house priceless icons, sculptures and religious relics. Most noteworthy are:

- the Rococo-style main **altar**, made by Isidro Lorea, one of the best carvers of the colonial period;
- the statue of **Santo Cristo de Buenos Aires**, located on the left arm of the transept, which is the oldest image of Christ made in the River Plate, and considered by some to be the most beautiful in Buenos Aires;
- and the **Virgin de los Dolores** (Virgin of Grief), imported from Cádiz, Spain in 1752.

The **Mausoleum of San Martín** is in the nave to your right as you enter. Alongside the General's tomb are those of his generals and the tomb of Argentina's Unknown Soldier. San Martín's ashes are stored in a red marble vessel at the foot of the monument dedicated to his military feats. The Grenaderos guard this nave.

In the cupola, a depiction of the Inca Sun pays homage to the Indian civilization that flourished on the continent. The victory flag carried by San Martín bears the name and image of Buenos Aires patron saint, Martin of Tours. This Hungarian saint lived, died and was later canonized in France, his adopted country.

Picking a Saint

The city's early settlers thought that a Spanish saint would be appropriate for this Spanish city, and a "scientific" method of drawing saints names out of a hat was employed. Every slip of paper picked revealed the name of Martin of Tours so the frustrated Argentineans accepted Saint Martin as the protector of the city.

To this day, the law states that the President of Argentina must be a Catholic. A beautiful garden adjoins the cathedral.

President Menem, born to the Muslim faith, converted to Catholicism.

The last historic site in the plaza and the one most closely associated with the city is the **Cabildo**. It functioned as the Town Hall in colonial times and served as the working offices of the Spanish Viceroys who governed here for hundreds of years. It was the headquarters for the first independent government of Argentina as well. The Cabildo museum contains exhibits of artifacts from the colonial period and documents and memorabilia related to Argentina's independence.

Plaza de los Dos Congresos

A dozen short blocks separate the executive branch of government from the legislative one. The most direct walk is to follow **Avenida de Mayo**, the oldest official avenue in the city. Inaugurated in 1894 and designed to link the two plazas, the street became a magnet for lav-

Peru Station is an original. Note the wrought iron token booths and hanging gas lamps.

ish edifices, including five-story buildings considered "skyscrapers" in the 1880s. South America's first *subte* (metro) line, a five-mile run inaugurated in 1913, was built beneath the street.

Along Avenida de Mayo look for the offices of Argentina's internationally known newspaper, ***La Prensa***. The cupola atop the building serves as the paper's logo. **Café Tortoni** at number 829 is the oldest and most literary café in Buenos Aires. Local celebrities and foreign stars have all tipped elbows at the Tortoni (see *After Dark*, page 220). As you cross Avenida 9 de Julio, look for the gaunt and picturesque **sculpture** of Don Quixote, a gift to the Argentine people from Queen Sofia of Spain. Another important intersection is Calle Salta, which was once home to the **Avenida Theater**. Built in 1808, it was the first theater in Latin America to stage Garcia Lorca's immortal play "Bodas de Sangre" (Blood Wedding). Unfortunately, this important landmark was destroyed by fire several years ago.

As you near the National Congress Building you'll stroll through a series of *plazoletas* (small plazas), each featuring a beautiful statue or an enormous fountain. You'll recognize the Rodin statue *The Thinker*, one of several casts by the Rodin studio, placed here in 1907. The **Monument of the Two Congresses** was completed in 1914 to commemorate the 1813 Assembly that banished slavery and the 1816 Congress that officially proclaimed Argentina's inde-

pendence. At night the statue is illuminated by an intricate lighting system that makes the waters seem as if they are dancing.

The **National Congress Building** will remind North Americans of the Capitol Building in Washington D.C. It was completed in 1906, designed in an Italian classical style with Greek touches. Four stories high with a pavilion at either end, it is encircled by a Corinthian colonnade. Victor Meano, yet another Italian architect, was responsible for the design. At the top of the peristyle (on the portico) is a gorgeous bronze statue of a chariot and on the corners are winged victories with trumpets.

You can visit the interior of the Congress. If you do, be sure to see the Senatorial Chamber and the octagonal Salón Azul (Blue Room). It has marble floors, baccarat chandeliers and a circular balcony, from which the dome and cupola can be seen.

Avenida 9 de Julio/Teatro Colón

★ Did You Know?

This avenue is one city block wide – a total of 425 feet across – the widest street in the world.

Sandwiched by Avenidas Lima/Cerrito on the west and Irogoyen/Carlos Pelligrini on the east, 9 de Julio has no buildings on it.

With many small plazas running through its center and its length of over 26 blocks, this is a lovely place to stroll and people-watch. There are also numerous cafés and *confiterías* along both sides. Avenida 9 de Julio is a main artery

of the city and thus the location of several city landmarks, such as the Obelisco, the 9 de Julio Fountains, and the Teatro Colón at the Lavalle intersection.

A huge elegant building, the **Teatro Colón** takes up nearly the whole block at Cerrito and Tucumán. The main entrance is at the Plaza Lavalle, a lovely tree-filled park full of statues of dancers commemorating the members of an Argentine ballet troupe who perished in a plane crash in the 1960s. The Colón is one of the world's premiere opera houses and draws international artists. It is home to its own opera and ballet companies as well as a symphony orchestra. Tours of the theater are offered year-round.

A few blocks away at the **Plaza de La República** (at Corrientes) stands the city's most visible landmark, the **Obelisk**. Two hundred twenty feet high, it was constructed in 1936 to mark the 400th anniversary of the city's founding. Two lovely fountains here are illuminated at night and are visible for blocks.

A beautiful sight.

Calle Florida/Plaza San Martín

Calle Florida, a pedestrian walkway, stretches for 11 blocks from Rivadavia to the Plaza San Martín. It was for many years the city's premiere shopping street and for sheer quantity and variety it still is. The quality of the goods sold has fallen off a bit because many of the shops formerly on the street have relocated to shopping malls. Still there are over 500 shops along Florida, many of them tucked away in

Numbers rise on Florida from Rivadavia to the Plaza San Martín.

mini-arcades called *galerías.* The shops sell just about everything imaginable from fine furs and leathers to inexpensive jewelry and shoes.

More about Calle Florida in the Shopping section.

You can spend hours browsing and shopping on this vital street. Its cobblestoned walkway is crowded with shoppers, office workers, newspaper kiosks, *pancho* carts and pick-up musicians and artists hoping for some spare change. In addition to the shops, Calle Florida has fast food eateries and several *confiterías*. The best known is the venerable **Richmond,** which attracts *porteños* who enjoy the clubby atmosphere and the non-stop chess games on the sub-level.

✻ Tip

Keep in mind that the finer quality shops are closer to Plaza San Martín, with the most elegant in the 800 and 900 blocks.

A standout is the stunning **Galerías Pacífico**, a multi-level mall on the 700 block, which opened in 1992 in an Italian-style building, formerly the headquarters for the Buenos Aires-Pacific Railway. The dome, painted by five well-known Argentinean artists, is spectacular.

At the foot of Calle Florida, where it meets the Plaza San Martín, stands the **Plaza Hotel**, an elegant five-star where many V.I.P. visitors to the city have been entertained (see page 75).

The Plaza is now part of the Marriott chain.

Another prime shopping street, Avenida Santa Fe branches off the plaza too.

El Retiro (The Retreat) is named for the San Sebastian Hermitage, which once stood here.

Plaza San Martín, marked by an equestrian statue commissioned by President Sarmiento, is enveloped by a park that extends downhill to Avenida Libertador, the wide thoroughfare that heads to the northern areas of the city. This part of town is called **El Retiro,** as is the massive railroad station at the base of the park. Plaza San Martín is one of the few elevated areas in a city that is extremely flat. Today the park is crossed by winding pathways amid flowering *palos borrachos*, palm and rubber trees. It has children's playgrounds; young lovers enjoy the grassy slopes; and it is one of the most pleasant spots in the city.

On the Libertador side of the park a recent monument honors those Argentineans killed during the Malvinas War. Much like the Vietnam Memorial, the names of the fallen are engraved on a black stone wall, marked by an eternal flame and guarded by an honor guard.

A distinctive building overlooks the park. The **Kavanagh Building**, now a 30-story residential tower, was the tallest building in all South America when it was built in 1934.

If you spend some time in the park you're sure to hear the distinctive chimes of a clock marking each hour. The clock, a replica of London's Big Ben, was a gift of Buenos Aires' British community. The plaza was called Plaza Británica until the Malvinas conflict when the name was changed to **Plaza Fuerzas Aéreas** (Air Force). Also nearby, a carved totem pole stands in **Plaza Canada**. Carved by Kwakiate

tribesmen, it was a gift from the Canadian government.

Exploring Puerto Madero

Until recently, Puerto Madero was little more than a wasteland of decaying warehouses and docks, abandoned far longer than it had been operational. Built in the late 19th century, it was not large enough, nor were its channels deep enough, to handle the increasing demands of modern commerce. Obsolete after only two decades, Puerto Madero was replaced by the **Puerto Nuevo**, Argentina's principal port and one of the largest in the world.

> ★ **Did You Know?**
>
> Ironically, Puerto Madero had been built to replace the city's original port on the Riachuelo, which, like its replacement, was not deep or large enough to meet the demands of Argentina's growing commerce with other parts of the world.

Other Argentine ports include Rosario and Santa Fe, both of which are on the Rio Paraná, and Bahia Blanca, an ocean port and the country's only deep water port.

Starting shortly after Puerto Madero closed, and continuing until the end of the 1980s, numerous plans were presented to redevelop the abandoned port. However it was not until 1989 with the creation of the *Corporación*

Antiguo Puerto Madero S.A. that any of them actually came to fruition. Though still a work in progress, Puerto Madero has become a thriving social and commercial center. Its original granaries, warehouses and docks have been faithfully restored and now house modern offices, luxury lofts, fine restaurants, art galleries and event centers.

Getting There

To reach Puerto Madero, follow Avenidas Córdoba, Corrientes Presidente Perón, or any of the thoroughfares in between, towards the river. Cross Leandro N. Alem and Eduardo Madero to Puerto Madero's main strip, Avenida Alicia Moreau de Justo. It's hard to believe that the three-story red brick buildings lining the port side of the avenue, now home to some of the city's poshest restaurants, were once warehouses. Ships would pull up to the docks and unload their cargo into the warehouses for storage and distribution throughout the city and, perhaps, the country.

✻ Tip

Combine a morning visit to the Plaza de Mayo and Plaza de los Dos Congresos with lunch at one of Puerto Madero's fine restaurants or come in the evening for dinner.

Continue on towards the waterfront by cutting through one of the passageways to the *malecón*,

a beautifully landscaped pedestrian promenade which runs alongside the docks for three kilometers. Here you'll find people strolling, jogging, rollerblading or just relaxing in the sun away from the hustle and bustle of downtown. Most of the restaurants on Alicia Moreau de Justo have outdoor terraces and picture windows which open onto the *malecón*. The area across the water from the docks was once dedicated to the storage and processing of grains and cereals shipped to Buenos Aires from the interior provinces. Now fully restored, the granaries and silos have been declared historic monuments and their unique interiors function as exhibit halls and convention centers.

Look beyond the roofs of the warehouses to the modern glass and steel skyscrapers on Eduardo Madero as they tower above the port to create a skyline of Buenos Aires past and present.

The Docks

Dique 4

The northernmost of the docks and the most popular with executives and lawyers, Dique 4 is home to many of our recommended restaurants, some shops and offices. Cross the water to the **Puerto Madero Yacht Club** ,where you can admire the yachts moored there.

Dique 3

Located directly behind the Casa Rosada and Parque Colón, Dique 3 formerly housed "state-of-the-art" grain elevators. Moored alongside Dique 3 is the ***Sarmiento***. Dating back to 1897 and built by English shipbuilders, this noble frigate was the lead ship of the Argentine Armada between 1899 and 1938. Equipped

with 12 cannons and 35 sails, its original riggings are still intact and it now functions as a museum. Several of our recommended restaurants are in the warehouses here.

Dique 2

Formerly dedicated to the exportation of cereals and grains, Dique 2 will serve as the new campus of the **Catholic University of Argentina**, the most exclusive university in the country, which is scheduled to open in the year 2,000.

Dique 1

At press time, much of Dique 1 was still under reconstruction, destined to become new office and living space as well as home to fine restaurants.

Dique 1 was once the point of entry or departure for livestock. Anchored here is the **Corbeta *Uruguay***, a sloop acquired by the Argentine Armada from British shipbuilders during the presidency of Domingo Faustino Sarmiento. Designed with an iron hull for passage in Antarctic waters, in 1903 the *Uruguay* was used to rescue Otto Nordenskjöld during his frustrated South Pole journey.

Exploring Barrio Norte

Broadly speaking, Barrio Norte stretches from the Plaza San Martín to the suburb of Palermo. That encompasses a lot of geography, so the *barrio* is divided into smaller enclaves. **Recoleta** is of most interest to visitors. It is a fashionable residential area with a mingling of modern apartment dwellings and colonial-style mansions. There are museums, exclusive social

clubs, posh boutiques, gourmet restaurants and lively night spots. It is fun to visit during the daylight hours as well as at night and you'll want to spend some time here.

Palermo Chico is another exclusive residential area, with several foreign embassies. Many diplomats live here as well. While the architecture is stunning, there is little else of interest to visitors.

A third area within the district (for want of a distinctive name, we've dubbed it "**Barrio Norte Sud**") has recently started to emerge as a magnet for young professionals and singles. Clustered between Avenida Santa Fe and Córdoba (on the Cerrito side of 9 de Julio) and extending to Avenida Callao, trendy, moderately priced restaurants and late night stops have recently opened. A late night favorite, **La Plaza** is in this area, as are many cinemas. Crowded late into the night, it is much like New York's Tribeca section.

Recoleta

Beautiful people far outnumber the Recoleta friars who gave this area its name. They established a convent here, named it for the Virgin of Pilar, and started construction of the Church in 1716. Their neighbors, poor fishermen, washerwomen and butchers, called it the *Convento de los Padres Recoletos* or *La Recoleta* for short. The convent was closed in the 1820s and its orchard became Buenos Aires' first public cemetery.

In the 1870s, a yellow fever epidemic spread through the southern districts of Buenos Aires and those who were able to do so moved to the north. They built lovely "Belle Epoque" homes and "mini-palaces," now embassies and politicians' residences that look as if they were shipped directly from the Champs Elysées.

★ Did You Know?

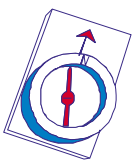
Avenida Alvear even has lamposts that were donated by General Charles de Gaulle because he found the street uncomfortably dim on a visit to Buenos Aires many years ago.

This style prevailed until the 1940s, when the modern urbanization process began, and the middle class made Recoleta its home. With that new source of money came the restaurants, cafés, galleries and antique shops you see today.

If you take a taxi, ask to be let off at La Biela Cafe.

Getting There

Buses #17, 61, 62, 93, 101 and 108 all head to Recoleta from the downtown area. A taxi will take less than 10 minutes. You can easily walk to Recoleta from the Plaza San Martín. It will take about 30 minutes unless you stop en route, which you'll probably want to do.



Orientation

Avenidas Alvear and Quintana - Recoleta's main streets lead from Carlos Pelligrini Square

to the cemetery, Basílica and convent (now a cultural center) at the heart of the district. Both streets are home to fashionable shops, hotels, night spots and lovely homes.

Calles R M Ortiz and Junín - The finest restaurants in Buenos Aires are found on these streets, which are closed to traffic. Sidewalk cafés on the promenade are the most popular meeting spots in town.

Alvear Public Square - Adjacent to this grassy square are the cemetery, Basílica and convent that are the heart of historic Recoleta.

Plaza Carlos Pelligrini - At Calle Libertad, this square houses the city's finest private clubs and foreign embassies. It is the traditional border of Recoleta and downtown Buenos Aires.

Plaza Francia - Home to the Museum of Fine Arts, the best museum in Buenos Aires.

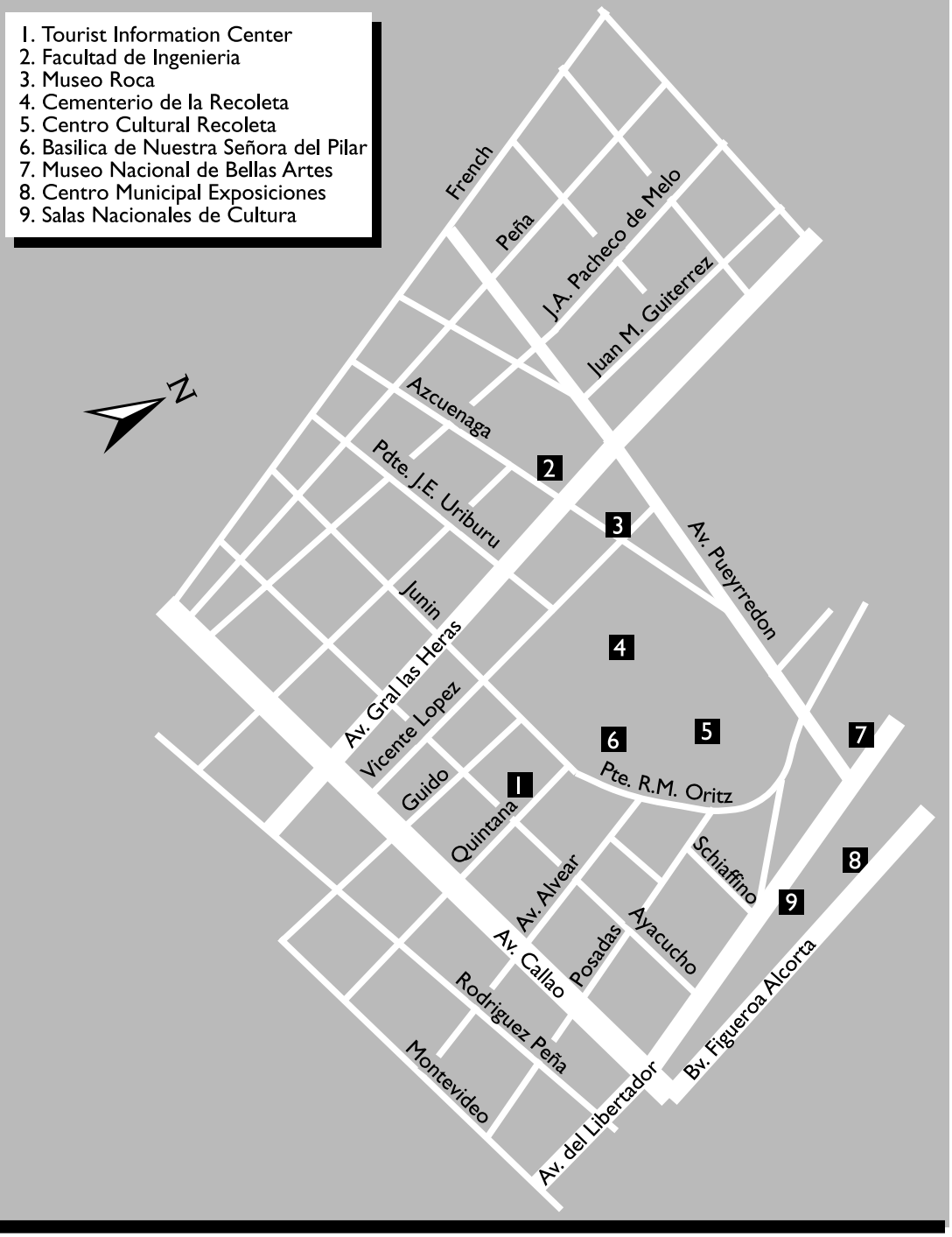
Historic Recoleta

The Recoleta Cemetery, the Basílica of Our Lady of Pilar and the Convent of the Recoletos form the triumvirate that sits atop the gently sloping hill behind the Alvear Public Square. **The Basílica of Our Lady of Pilar** sits to one side of the cemetery. The church dates back to 1716 and was completed in 1732 under the direction of Jesuit architects Andrés Blanqui and Juan Prímoli. Its beauty lies in its simplicity. A single tower rises on the left side of the church and is partially covered in tile that was added after construction. There is a belfry with a double arch located on the opposite side, crowned by a colonial-era clock tower that sits between two pear-shaped ornaments.

The Basílica is a favorite place to get married in the city. Saturdays are most popular.

Pilar is a splendid example of Argentinean colonial architecture. Inside, the main altar is itself a great piece of Baroque art. Note the Virgin of Pilar, placed in a central niche in the altar. The Altar of Relics (*Altar de las Reliquias)* is made of mahogany with brass appliqués. The

La Recoleta


1. Tourist Information Center
2. Facultad de Ingenieria
3. Museo Roca
4. Cementerio de la Recoleta
5. Centro Cultural Recoleta
6. Basilica de Nuestra Señora del Pilar
7. Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes
8. Centro Municipal Exposiciones
9. Salas Nacionales de Cultura
N
French
Peña
J.A. Pacheco de Melo
Juan M. Guiterrez
Azcuenaga
Pdte. J.E. Uriburu
Junin
Av. Gral las Heras
Vicente Lopez
Guido
Quintana
Av. Alvear
Av. Callao
Rodriguez Peña
Montevideo
Av. del Libertador
Posadas
Ayacucho
Schiaffino
Pte. R.M. Oritz
Av. Pueyrredon
Bv. Figueroa Alcorta
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9

The Basílica was declared a National Historic Monument in 1942.

Basílica, however, is not only a Baroque jewel with a valuable collection of religious art; it also served as a relief station for the British during the invasions of 1806 and remains the only church in Buenos Aires to keep its cemetery.

The old **Convent of the Recoletos**, at Calle Junín 1930 is now the **Centro Cultural de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires**. The convent occupied this site from 1732 until 1822, and was used as a home for the reclusive monks. After 1822 it served a number of different purposes. Among other things, it was an old peoples' home called the *Hogar General Viamonte*, a jail, a hospital, and an army barracks. In 1979 the city decided to house its cultural center here. The center boasts an excellent collection of 20th-century Argentine art and offers workshops on photography, art restoration and other interesting topics. Special art exhibits are held here as well. Check schedules.

The Eduardo Sivori Art Museum, open daily 4-8 pm, ☎ 46-9664.

As the saying goes, "You ain't seen nothing yet." The most interesting site in La Recoleta is the **Cementerio de La Recoleta** (Recoleta Cemetery), marked by a majestic neoclassical portico and entrance. The cemetery opened in 1822 on the site of the old convent's orchard.

The Cemetery is at the corner of Junín and Quintana. It's open from 8 am daily.

Many of Argentina's famous citizens are buried here. The graves are spread over 10 acres of land and total an incredible 7,000. In addition to the facts, there are some quaint and hard-to-believe tales relating to some of the dead. Ask the groundskeeper about the grave of Señorita Rufina Cambaceres and he will lead you to it.

Señorita Rufina Cambaceres

The unlucky lady is said to have been mistakenly buried while in the midst of a cataleptic fit. After the burial she succeeded in escaping her casket with terrific effort, only to die at the gates of the cemetery of a heart attack. Rufina was 15 years old when she died in 1909. There may actually be a factual basis to this awful tale. The enemies of her politician father were accused of masterminding the plot and the cataleptic attack that led to her demise.

Dr. Pedro Arata's tomb is certainly one of the most unusual. It is a replica of an Egyptian pyramid and remains incomplete to this day. There are several graves with Egyptian motifs in Recoleta, recalling the obsessive fascination with the afterlife. Dr. Federico Leloir's grave is the most expensive one. There is space within for 60 coffins and the interior of the dome is covered with pure gold tiles.

Isabel Walenska was rumored to be the granddaughter of Napoleon Bonaparte, although her grave is entered in the Recoleta registry, there is no mark on her burial place. Many bodies, in fact, are listed in the registry but do not appear anywhere in the cemetery, largely due to the remodelling that has gone on over the years. These persons lie anonymously in forgotten vaults. Remedios Escaleda de San Martín, wife of the Liberator, lies in a small and simple

grave that General San Martín designed himself.

La Recoleta Cemetery is a world unto itself – a world of the dead. The people interred in these vaults of neoclassic splendor were the best and brightest or the wealthiest in the land. Recoleta was the elite place to be laid to rest in this country that reveres the dead to a near-fervent degree.

Seventy of these mausoleums have been declared national monuments.

The tall twisted trees that lend their shape to the sleeping citizens of Recoleta Cemetery are ancient magnolias over a century old.

✻ Tip

Try to find a groundskeeper and ask him where the most notable persons are entombed. He will be happy to lead you to all the most interesting final resting places.

Eva Duarte Perón is to be found here in the Duarte mausoleum, which is actually one of the most modest in the entire cemetery. Evita's vault is usually well-attended, with visitors leaving behind bunches of roses and lilies at the foot of the tomb. Flowers are woven into the wrought iron doors of many of the flagrantly grandiose tombs, some of which bear framed faded photographs of the deceased. Evita's tomb bears a plaque which proclaims her as "the champion of the working classes."

You'll find it virtually impossible to fully appreciate the artistry represented in this place – it's

too plentiful and too close together. Focus instead on a part of the cemetery. You will see that every portion of earth is covered with monuments to the heroes who lie beneath them: the tomb of José Paz with the imploring angels facing the heavens; the neoclassical Aramburu mausoleum (the plaque tells how one Aramburu seized power from Perón in 1955 and was subsequently kidnapped and killed by the communists); and the tombs of Yrigoyen, Saavedra, and Dorrego Guillermo Brown. The names begin to sound familiar if you've been in Argentina any length of time.

The many Italian names in the cemetery, including that of the Spineto family, are interred in mausoleums copied from ones in the famous cemetery in Genoa. Carrera marble and special stones were shipped from Italy to construct the incredible graves you see today. The Spineto grave features a bronze filigreed door with representations of St. George and the Dragon.

Facundo Quiroga's request was certainly one of the oddest. He asked to be buried in a standing position. His wishes were followed, and his coffin is supported by two pillars and walled in place with a haunting statue called "Sorrowing Mary" standing as a sentinel. The figure may, in fact, represent his grieving widow. You will see similar statues of weeping mothers and wives incorporated in the design of other graves as well.

Recoleta Today - A Walking Tour

Start at **Carlos Pelligrini Square,** which is the site of **The Jockey Club.** The city's most prestigious club, it was founded by President Pelligrini and his statue stands in the middle of the square. The mansions around the square are now occupied by embassies of singular beauty. The Brazilian Embassy sports vividly painted ceilings and the delicate white mansion on the concrete island in the middle of traffic is the French Embassy.

Follow Avenida Libertador to Calle Libertad.

Calle Posadas, which leads from this square, passes the five-star Caesar Park Hotel and the Patio Bullrich Shopping Center. It is a quiet block to stroll along. **Avenida Alvear**, which also leads from this square, and the next parallel street, **Avenida Quintana**, are the main arteries of today's Recoleta. Here the French- , Spanish- and Italian-style mansions begin to mix with the modern steel and glass edifices of the 20th century. The streets are rife with designer clothing shops and fine furniture and antique stores. The intersection of Avenida Alvear and **Avenida Callao** has some of the city's best art galleries. You can spend hours exploring these two streets, which also boast some of the city's finest eateries and night spots. If you stop for lunch at one of the sidewalk cafés you can observe the social scene of upscale *porteños*.

Stop by Freddo's on Avenida Quintana at Ayacucho for ice cream.

You'll soon find yourself in the heart of historic Recoleta, the spot where the Recoleta Friars

built their convent and church. Two important plazas lie just outside the grassy hill: **Intendente Alvear Square** and **Ramón Cárcano Public Square**. The former is marked by a statue of the Argentine Patriot, Carlos María de Alvear. Built with bronze and marble, its wide staircase affords a view of the entire area. This tree-lined, shady spot was born spontaneously when the people who attended funerals started to gather there. The kiosks they set up were the forerunners of the weekly open-air market that operates here. **Ramón Carcano Public Square** faces the gate of the Recoleta Cemetery.

Stop for a light lunch or late afternoon tea at **Plaza de Pilar**, an upscale "foodcourt" in the lower level of the Recoleta Design Building. Here you'll find a series of restaurants serving everything from burgers to pizza to pasta. You can eat indoors or out. More about Plaza de Pilar dining options in *Best Places to Eat*.

Museo de Bellas Artes (Museum of Fine Arts), Buenos Aires' finest museum, is at Avenida Libertador 1473 in the Recoleta section (see *Museums*, page 199). It is adjacent to the beautiful **Plaza Francia.** The wonderful monument in its plaza, by the French sculptor Peynot, was a gift from the French community on the centennial of Argentina's first native government. Every Sunday afternoon Plaza Francia is the site of an outdoor flea market. It's Woodstock Recoleta-style. Young men with ponytails and girls with love beads around their

Many quaint inexpensive items can be found here.

throats sell silver jewelry, miniature ceramic houses in colonial style, small earthen pots and gaily painted animals.

Palermo Chico

For a peek at Palermo Chico follow **Avenida Figueroa Alcorta**. This is primarily a residential area with stunning homes and foreign embassies. There are few shops or eateries. Here too the streets wind in one of the few parts of Buenos Aires where the grid pattern doesn't exist. Two museums in Palermo Chico are the **José Hernández Museum** for displays of Argentine crafts and *gaucho* lore and the **Museum of Oriental and Decorative Arts**. Stop at **Café Tabac** for tea and pastries.

Both museums are covered in the Museums *section.*

Exploring Buenos Aires' Southern Quarter

When Juan de Garay founded the city of Buenos Aires in 1580, he brought 63 families with him. As the city grew most of the settlements were near the Plaza Mayor (now Plaza de Mayo) or to the south of it. Beautiful homes and churches were built, businesses were opened and the area prospered. In the 1870s the city was hit by an outbreak of yellow fever. Blame for the epidemic was placed on the thick fog which rolled over the area from the nearby Riachuelo River. Wealthier families and anyone able to leave deserted this quarter for the northern parts of the city. The homes they left behind were filled by poor immigrants who

were arriving in Argentina in large numbers. Many of these immigrants were Italian. The southern quarter of Buenos Aires became run-down. The lovely homes closed, as did many businesses. Conditions remained the same for many years until the years after the Second World War, when artists, writers and intellectuals moved into the quarter looking for inexpensive housing. They started to restore the old homes, plant small gardens and open shops and restaurants. Now the southern quarter is picturesque and charming to visit – both during the day and at night. While not trendy like Recoleta, the *barrios* of **San Telmo** and **La Boca** are fun to visit.

San Telmo

Because the government has protected San Telmo by passing strict zoning and preservation laws, this *barrio* is the most historically interesting part of the city. As you stroll along its narrow sidewalks and cobblestoned streets and peek into the lovely tile courtyards, you'll see remnants of the 18th and 19th century. Most of the area has remained unchanged since the turn of the century. While many homes have been renovated of late, the facades have been retained. There are several historical museums in San Telmo. These are described in the *Museums* section that follows. The 20th century is represented by famous *tanguerías* (tango parlors), jazz clubs, antique shops and a don't-miss flea market. The *tanguerías* are

detailed in *Buenos Aires After Dark*. See *Best Places to Eat* for fine dining options in this area.

Getting There

San Telmo is just south of the Plaza de Mayo. **The Plaza Dorrego**, site of a wonderful Sunday Flea Market and the heart of the *barrio*, is less than a dozen blocks away. You can walk directly between the two plazas along Calle Defensa in under 10 minutes. You can also plan a leisurely stroll from either plaza along the most interesting streets, stopping at a few historical sights. In either case, be in Plaza Dorrego when the fair is in full swing.

History

When the city was founded at the Plaza de Mayo in 1580, a small settlement grew up near the fledgling port on the Riachuelo. The area was known as "Alto de San Pedro" and the earliest residents clustered around a square called the Plaza de la Residencia for the Jesuit residence nearby. Now called **Plaza Dorrego**, it is the city's second oldest square. The plaza became a popular rest point for ox carts and horses en route from the port to the city and from Buenos Aires to the interior of the country. Lots of small saloon/grocery stores were set up. The original residents of this small port "town" were fishermen and dock workers; mostly Italians, Irish, Creoles and blacks.

African Rhythm

The presence of blacks in the area had more than a coincidental impact on the birth of the tango in that same area. The rhythm and beat of the first tangos were distinctly African influenced. The blacks did not remain in Argentina for very long, but the unique cultural influence they brought with them did.

For a time in the late 18th and early 19th century a great number of wealthy homes were built to accommodate the prominent people who were moving to the area. Generals Liniers, Manuel Belgrano and Lavalle lived in San Telmo at different times. The majority of the homes were Spanish colonial with wrought-iron adornments on the doors and windows, and Andalusian-style balconies that were handmade for distinguished families. These flat-roofed two-story houses overwhelmed the older Romanesque structures that featured slanted roofs, ample use of tiles, inner patios and long, spacious rooms.

The street now called *Defensa* was originally called Mayor and it was here that the *aguateros* or water vendors would slowly ride on their horse-driven wagons, sitting amongst large casks of fresh water that they sold house-to-house. The ladies of the house would collect the wash and deliver it to the washerwomen who

San Telmo

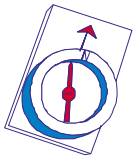
1. Museo Historicol Nacional
2. Monumento Pedro de Emndoza
3. Iglesia Ortodoxa Rusa de la Santisima Trinidad
4. Parroquia Inmaculada Concepcion
5. Plaza Dorrego / Ferias de Antiguedades
6. Iglesia Dinamarquesa
7. Casa Esteban de Luca
8. Canto al Trabajo
9. Facultad de Ingeneria
10. Museo Historico del Traje
11. Casa de Liniers
12. Templo Presbiteriano San Andres
13. Museo Etnografico "Juan B. Ambrosetti"
14. Museo de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires
15. Colegio Nacional de Buenos Aires
16. Museo Motivos Argentinos "José Hernandez"
17. Honorable Consejo Deliberante
18. Diario La Prensa
19. Palacio Municipal
20. Museo de la Casa de Gobierno
21. Monumento a Cristobal Colon
22. Casa de Gobierno

would follow Mayor down to the river to do the laundry.

The streets were often flooded and muddy. Occasionally a puddle would be so deep that a small animal would drown in it. This may account for the yellow fever epidemic that hit San Telmo, forcing the wealthier residents to flee.

For a time San Telmo lost much of its sparkle, but in the last three decades the district has experienced a rebirth.

Orientation



A taxi from downtown hotels to Plaza Dorrego will take five minutes and under 15 minutes from Recoleta.

Plaza Dorrego - Located at the intersection of Calles Defensa and Humberto I, Plaza Dorrego was and is the social center of San Telmo. Not a leafy retreat, this square has always been an important commercial center. The *pulperías* (saloon/grocery stores) of yesterday were the forerunners of the wall-to-wall stores, cafés, shopping arcades and restaurants we see today. Architectural styles include Spanish colonial, French and Italian.

Calle Defensa - The most direct route from the Plaza de Mayo to Plaza Dorrego. Many historic churches and buildings are on or near it. Not far from Plaza Dorrego, it contains the city's finest antique shops.

Calle Balcarce - Balcarce, one block east of Defensa, is an alternate route to Plaza Dorrego. While it meanders a bit, it does offer the oppor-

tunity to pinpoint the city's best known *tanguerías*.

Calles Carlos Calvo/Humberto I - Plaza Dorrego is sandwiched between these two streets and they are also interesting in their own right. Humberto I has several important historic buildings, while Carlos Calvo has San Telmo's best restaurants, all in renovated historic quarters.

Pasaje Giuffra/Calle San Lorenzo - Two cobblestoned streets, alleyways that cross Calle Balcarce (on either side of Avenida Independencia), also retain traditional San Telmo flavor. Giuffra and the blocks adjoining it are peppered with nightclubs and bars that have the added attraction of being housed in some of the district's more gracious buildings. These were converted into tenements after the yellow fever plague. Many of San Lorenzo's houses have been converted into art galleries by their artist landlords. Numbers 319 and 389 are good examples. As interesting as the art on the walls are the walls themselves, a style that is forever gone.

San Telmo Today

Plaza Dorrego is the place everything begins and ends in San Telmo, especially on Sunday when the flea market/tango fest takes center stage. There is a smaller market every Saturday (October-April), but it pales next to the Sunday version, which operates year-round.

Dorrego Fair is always on Sunday, 10 am to 5 pm.

On Sunday merchants set up stalls and peddle their wares, which range from antique watches on chains (they work),to rare and used books, religious articles, copper pots and pans, *gaucho* gear, glassware and clothing. Bargaining is intense and, even if you don't understand the words, watch the body language. All the while, street musicians (called buskers) perform. Some are paid by the market organizers and, while they are dressed to the nines and beautiful to watch as they glide across the cement dance floor, it's a job. Head instead to the street performers who work different points of Calle Defensa. An older duo, the singer coiffed and dressed to look like Carlos Gardel, is really intense, as are the dance teams on Humberto I. Just a few centavos keep them going.

The market is not the only place to shop near Plaza Dorrego. There are several mini-arcades in and near the plaza to explore. **Galería El Solar de French** on Calle Defensa overlooking Plaza Dorrego has over 30 shops. Although a few sell antiques, others sell contemporary clothing and gifts. It's in a lovely historic building as well. Just south of Humberto I, you'll find **Galería Ponte Vecchio** at Defensa 1135 and nearby **Pasaje de la Defensa** at 1179. The latter is more attractive and is ensconced in a multi-level historic building. **La Botica de Vichy**, shop #3, has terrific antique clothing (hats especially) that is all the rage with US teens.

See more on antique shops in the Shopping *section.*

Light Dining Options

The Café is on the second floor.

You can take in the scene from any number of small eateries. The best views are from **Café French** in the Galería El Solar. Windows open onto the plaza and some tables are set on a small terrace enclosed by a wrought iron rail. Burgers, omelettes, and the like are served with tango music (sometimes live) as an accompaniment.

There are fine dining establishments in San Telmo. These are detailed in Best Places to Eat.

Another good choice is **Plaza Dorrego Bar** at Humberto I. Dark indoors with wooden tables scarred by cigarette burns, the floor is ankle-deep in peanut shells. Tables are set on the plaza when weather permits. Also in the plaza are **Café del Arbol** at Humberto 422, where locals read their Sunday papers and munch on *medias lunas* and steaming cups of coffee, and **Pizza Plaza** at 427, which serves pies and pastas.

San Telmo Sights

Telmo was the Neopolitan patron saint of sailors.

Iglesia San Pedro Gonzales Telmo, at Humberto I 340, is just a half-block from the plaza.

Construction began in the 1730s on the church and the adjoining cloister. These were designed by a Jesuit architect, Father Andrés Blanqui. When the Jesuits were expelled in 1767, construction stopped and the church wasn't completed until 1850. The dome and cloister are all that remain of Blanqui's design. Look for the special image of the Virgin of Bethlehem that

was brought from Spain and a marble slab used as an operating table in the first city hospital.

> ★ **Did You Know?**
>
> The British actually used San Telmo Church as a stronghold during their second incursion into Buenos Aires. The clock was donated by the soldiers who sought refuge there and were spared after the British were badly beaten.

The cloister that adjoins the church at #378 now houses a small and lackluster museum, the **Museo Penitenciario** (Penitentiary Museum), so named because at one point the cloister housed the Women's Correctional Prison.

As you leave the plaza, you'll want to stroll through the surrounding streets. **Calles Carlos Calvo**, **San Lorenzo**, **Balcarce**, **Pasaje Giuffra**, and others are what give San Telmo character. Look for the ceramic plaques posted on buildings. They identify those with historic significance. A good example of this is the **Casa de Esteban de Luca** on Calle Defensa at Carlos Calvo. Now a saloon/eaterie, it was once the home of a revolutionary poet and reputedly an arms factory and weapons arsenal.

Continuing north along Calle Defensa, you'll see exclusive antique shops and, near Avenida Independencia, the defunct **Cine Cecil**, now a funky antiques market.

✻ Tip

You have to know your stuff here. It reminds us of an antique shop sign we once saw in Singapore – "We buy junk and sell antiques."

Just beyond Independencia, you'll find yourself at **Calle Chile**, which was once a stream and the traditional border of San Telmo. The small area between Chile and the Plaza de Mayo is alternately called **Catedral al Sur** or **Montserrat**. In fact, these traditional lines have blurred and the entire area from the Plaza de Mayo south to Lezama Park is considered San Telmo.

The corner of Calle Defensa and Calle Venezuela is known as "Death Corner" because of the vicious fighting that took place here between the British and the *criollos*. The building at Defensa 628 has the dubious distinction of being the very spot from which Argentineans poured pots of boiling water and oil on the heads of the passing British troops in the early 1800s.

The **Santo Domingo Church**, also called the **Basílica Menor del Santísimo Sacramento**, is located at the intersection of Calles Defensa and Belgrano. This church's past has been severely marked for posterity by the British. During the second invasion in 1807 they used it as a fortress; and if you look up at one of its two towers you can see the pockmarked surface, created by the bullets shot in the battle for

the reconquest of Buenos Aires. Inside the church are a collection of flags and banners confiscated from the British troops and kept in a shrine in the Altar of the Blessed Virgin of the Holy Rosary. Generals Belgrano and Balcarce have found their final resting places here in the atrium of the church.

Another impressive old church, the **Basílica de San Francisco** and the smaller **Capilla San Roque** are at Calles Defensa and Alsina. At first a modest chapel, San Francisco, built in 1754, became the headquarters of the Franciscan Order, which made its first foray into the area in 1538. San Roque predates San Francisco and is part of a building that was erected in 1602. The present buildings, however, are much more recent, although they were built on the old foundations.

★ Did You Know?

The church was looted and even partially burned in the riots that preceded the fall of Juan Perón in the 1950s.

Today the Basílica houses a multitude of priceless items: paintings, rare books (in the Basílica Library), manuscripts dating back to the Middle Ages and ecclesiastical artifacts.

Across Calle Defensa you'll see the **Museo de la Ciudad** (Municipal Museum) at Calle Alsina 412. Yes, it is up that steep flight of stairs. The governors of the museum also manage the San Telmo market (see *Museums*). The

Estrella Pharmacy (Farmacia Estrella) on the ground floor, built in the 19th century, is part of the museum.

San Ignacio Church on Calle Alsina at Calle Bolívar (one block west of Defensa) is another of the city's oldest buildings. Named the Temple of the Company of Jesus but known as San Ignacio, it was constructed in 1710. Brother Juan Krauss designed it to follow a typical Jesuit church with a central nave and upper galleries. The main altar, made of carved and gilded wood with Baroque details is quite beautiful. The image on the left nave of the Altar is the oldest in the city; it depicts our Lady of Sorrow, who is actually the Virgin Mary. San Ignacio is known for its beautiful stained glass windows and magnificent Baroque facade.The church was occupied by invading British forces and by the forces of General Belgrano in 1811.

The Long Hair Rebellion

This last was known as the "Long Hair Rebellion." Believe it or not, the whole struggle began when the soldiers rebelled against an order to have their hair cut, as long hair was no longer in fashion. Eight soldiers were executed in the Plaza de Mayo for their stubborness.

The Jesuits constructed many important cultural institutions in this area. Among them were a public library, a Jesuit College and university and several churches. You can still read

the inscription marking the site of the University on Calle Alsina at Calle Peru. This area became the city's cultural center and a local newspaper dubbed it **Manzana de las Luces,** "The Square of the Enlightenment."

The Enlightenment is referred to as the Siglo de las Luces in Spanish.

Virtually all the Jesuit buildings were connected by a series of tunnels and catacombs. These were unearthed during later construction projects.

The southernmost border of San Telmo is marked by the **Parque Lezama** (Lezama Park). This park, which once stood in a pastoral setting and is now surrounded by big city traffic and noise, has seen better days. The land was once reserved for use by the King of Spain but he never visited his colony. It passed through many hands until it was purchased by an American, Carlos Home, as a gift for his Argentinean wife. They purchased adjoining property and built the mansion that was the finest in the city.

Eventually the grounds were purchased by José de Lezama, who gave them his name. He enlarged the grounds and filled them with statues, monuments and fountains. Many still stand today. His two-story home sported a high watchtower from which he and his wife could look out over the entire area.

In 1884 the municipality purchased the land and the house, transforming the first into a public park and the second into the **National Historic Museum** (see *Museums*, page 202).

Lezama Park once boasted a cinema, a circus and even a boxing ring. These no longer exist.

The Russian Orthodox Church of the Holy Trinity, at Brazil 315 at the north end of the park, is a curious building. The church was built in Buenos Aires by architect Alejandro Christophersen, based on designs by Mihail Timofeivich Preobrazensky of St. Petersburg, Russia. The design followed a strict Byzantine line and the church opened its doors to the relatively small Russian Orthodox congregation in 1904. Later, during the reign of the Russian royals, Czar Nicholas II and Czarina Alexandra sent 50 boxes filled with religious objects of great value to the young church. The gifts included the stars you see on the domes, made to represent the stars in the sky, and the chains which join these domes together, used in Russia to protect the domes from wind and snowfall.

The main altar is gold and the floor is covered with Persian carpets.

✻ Tip

The church is often closed to visitors, so if you want to attend a service or visit the church use the intercom located at the side entrance. Someone is usually inside and they will tell you when the church is open. Weekday mornings seem to be the best times.

La Boca

No part of Buenos Aires is more fun to visit than La Boca. Its wide raised sidewalks and brightly painted homes were set three feet above the ground because the area often flooded when the Riachuelo River overflowed its banks.

> ★ **Did You Know**
>
> In fact, *porteño* friends told us flooding happened so often that the sailors and fishermen who were the district's first residents kept a canoe tied to their front doors as a precaution.

When Buenos Aires was growing, to the north of this district, few people chose the mouth of this small river as home. But it did become home to thousands of immigrants, particularly those from Genoa, Italy. Their spirit is alive in the lively cantinas that open each evening, serving delicious Italian food and playing tarantella music. The life of the local fishermen takes on a distinct importance in the preparation of the "catch of the day," which is literally "of the day."

Art and Italians naturally walk hand in hand. The people that gave us Michelangelo and Fra Angelico adapted to their circumstances in a colorful way. You will understand this when you walk past **Caminito Street**, the dirt-paved alley that isn't much of a street at all. The corrugated tin shanties here have been

Caminito even lends its name to one of the most heart-wrenching tangos ever heard.

painted in all colors of the palette and the outdoor artists' market echoes the lively scene in many of the paintings and watercolors for sale here.

Some Background

While the Riachuelo sounds romantic, its waters are polluted from the boats

The name of the district, "La Boca," means "The Mouth," stemming from its location at the mouth of the Riachuelo (Little River) that flows into the Río de la Plata. Some say this was the city's first port and it has functioned since the beginning of the city's history. A few revisionists point to this area as the initial founding spot by Pedro de Mendoza in 1536.

Mendoza's name lives on in the *barrio's* main thoroughfare, but there is scant evidence that the city really started in La Boca. Not much is known about the district before 1800, when the first boatloads of immigrants arrived here. These European settlers found a land that was basically rural, made of country estates, farms and orchards. It was clear from that time on that the open spaces were not going to last very long, as the settlers saw vast opportunities, particularly near the river.

Warehouses sprang up along the riverside, and meat packing plants and curing houses replaced the grassy banks. The dry goods warehouses in La Boca purveyed their goods to all the boats that came to the Buenos Aires ports and soon business was thriving. A tramway installed in the 1870s served as the first link

between the suburb and the central city and had a strong impact on La Boca's development.

La Boca was doomed to small time status, however, so long as the harbor was capable of docking only small vessels. In 1883 this minus was turned into a plus when a local engineer devised a plan for dredging the river and building a canal that could handle large overseas vessels. The first transatlantic steamer to dock there the following year was, appropriately enough, the *Italia*. By 1885 scores of Genovese had arrived with their families in tow. They liked the area and ships like the *Galileo*, overflowing with immigrants, kept on coming. Edmundo de Amicis, a writer of note, was one of these immigrants. In one novel he refers to La Boca as "a small district somewhat Genovese in nature." This reference was certainly true in Amicis' day, when over one million Italians populated the district.

They gave the area its unique look. The men worked building the warehouses, the docks and the bridges we see today. They came with empty pockets, and lived in ramshackle leantos constructed from odds and ends left over from community projects. The houses were built on piles to protect them from floods, which occurred frequently. The government allowed them to keep whatever paint was left over as well. Often the paint was only enough to cover one wall of the house, so another color was used to paint the doors and still another for the win-

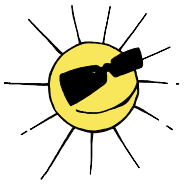
dow frames. Color co-ordination was a mere coincidence.

The multi-colored houses and *cantinas* of today mimic these early dwellings. The plaster walls are painted in pastel tones – with three or four colors applied to each. The streets are built up, so the houses are well above ground level to avoid the flooding when southwesterly winds blow. These houses remain, but this area of La Boca is shrinking. Much of the it contains modern apartment buildings and street-level sidewalks. You will want to spend your time in the distinctive waterfront area.

La Boca is one of the few areas in Buenos Aires where it is not safe to wander at night. If you intend to dine and dance here, take a cab to and from Nicochea Street.

In addition to the houses, other La Boca sights include the **ships cemetery** – anchored vessels, some still navigable, while others are just rusting away into ghosts of their former selves; a weekend art fair; and a fine arts museum. No-frills *cantinas* in the wildly painted buildings are open for lunch but roar into life at night. The *cantinas* are family-run restaurants with a limited menu and unlimited entertainment – part of which is supplied by you if you join in the tarentella dancing and singing.

More about cantinas in Buenos Aires After Dark.



Daytime in La Boca

Whether you arrive by bus, bicycle or taxi, your first acquaintance with La Boca will likely be by way of **Avenida Pedro de Mendoza.** This circuitous road extends from Avenida Brasil, near the Parque Lezama, and follows the course of the Riachuelo. It also bypasses the "Catalina Sur" complex, a relatively new devel-

opment of 1,800 much-needed apartments in a modern self-contained mini-city. Beyond this complex you enter vintage La Boca, greeted at the outset by **The Artists' Museum of Fine Arts of La Boca** at Pedro de Mendoza 1835. It is also called the Benito Quinquela Martín Museum, in honor of the illustrious artist who lived at this spot. The museum and children's school were founded in 1936 after Quinquela had collected numerous works through both donations and purchases. Today the museum contains over 800 paintings, sculptures, drawings and other works of art.

The museum is open Wednesday-Friday, 8 am-12 and 2-6 pm.

★ Did You Know?

Only works by Argentine artists may be displayed by the terms of Quinquela's will.

A few blocks away at the intersection of Pedro de Mendoza and Avenida Almirante Brown you will see the maritime museum called **Museo Corbeta A.R.A. Uruguay**. The ship displays nautical items. It is open from 1 to 6:30 pm, weekends and holidays.

Almirante is the Spanish word for admiral.

Just opposite Avenida Almirante Brown is the enormous **Avellaneda Bridge** spanning the Riachuelo. The bridge provides the area with a wonderful view over the city, the river and the other side of Avellaneda district. Lovers enjoy the solitude up there, especially on a Sunday when the escalators aren't running and you

have to walk about four flights to reach the top-level walkway.

There are actually two bridges at this site. The old Nicolas Avellaneda Bridge, now called the **Black Bridge**, was a transport bridge that served the locals for years. Pressing commercial requirements made the bridge obsolete, so a heavier duty bridge was erected in 1940 to link Buenos Aires with the populous suburb of Avellaneda. The bridge, by the way, weighs over 1,000 tons and is made of steel and cement.

Avenida Pedro de Mendoza follows the turn in the river that marks its mouth. It was here that the original port began and here too is the "ships cemetery." The small village square, located between Pedro de Mendoza and Dr. Del Valle Ibarlucea Street, is called **Vuelta de Rocha** because the land was formerly owned by a wealthy gent named Antonio Rocha. The monument here, a mast, rudder and anchor standing on a mound of rocks, pays homage to the sailors lost at sea. If you look across the water from the Vuelta you can see the opposite bank where Almirante Guillermo Brown, Argentina's greatest naval hero, had **La Maestranza** shipyard built. Ships fighting in the battle for independence were repaired here. Owing to this, the Vuelta de Rocha square also has a bust of Almirante Brown in its center.

Fronting the Vuelta is **Caminito**, a short lane only one block long, located between Calles Magallanes and Lamadrid. Caminito was originally a side track for the local railway and later

Benito Quinquela Martín and other La Boca residents convinced the city to remove the rails and pave the alley. The initiative resulted in the picturesque street you see today. Caminito has no sidewalks or doorways but it does have outlandishly colored walls and balconies and windows decorated by the artists and writers that live in the area. Among them was Juan de Dios Filiberto, a poet and lifelong Bohemian who made Caminito his home for years. He immortalized this street in his well-known tango "Caminito."

Caminito hosts a weekend art fair/flea market year-round.

Caminito Flea Market

Every Saturday from 12 noon to 6 pm and every Sunday from 10 am to 6 pm there is a flea market/art fair on Caminito. Artists paint colorful La Boca scenes and denizens. These original works of art (oils, pastels, and charcoal) are available in all price ranges and will remain favorites long after you return home.

At the entrance to the street, you will see the sculpture by Roberto Capurro called "San Martín and his People." There are other works here by Ibarra Garcia, Vergottini, Marisa Krause, José de Luca and others. In addition to the open-air art market, remember that Caminito is famous for the tango, which was born in the little tin houses that line the block. In the spring and summer there are tango festivals organized by the municipality. They are

particularly interesting because of the unusual backdrops that enhance the tango dancing.

Just across from Caminito, actually where it intersects with the cobblestoned Avenida Pedro de Mendoza, a new pier or *darsena* has been built on the Riachuelo. It is a lovely place to sit and watch the world go by. One of our recommended nightspots, the Café Tango Buenos Muchachos is located here.

You may also want to visit the **Santuario de Nuestra Señora Madre de los Immigrantes** at Necochea 3112. The church was consecrated in 1967 and has a special significance for the people of La Boca, who identify strongly with feelings of rootlessness or transience. The Virgin honored by this church watches over people who have left their comfortable roots and had the courage to start a new life, as many residents of La Boca have.

Calle Olavarría is one of La Boca's most interesting streets. Look for the lovely **St. John the Evangelist Church**, which is a rebuilt version of the original church that stood on this site in 1855. This is really a neighborhood church, shown in the art work brought from Turin to grace the inner chapel. It is typical of a turn-of-the-century church in the north of Italy, the ancestral home of many La Boca residents.

Nearby you'll see **Plaza Solís** (at Suarez), a small square lined by naval supply houses and sailor cafés. Here you'll glimpse the underside of La Boca, away from the relative "glitz" of the

cantinas. A notable sculpture called "Sailor's Mother" depicts a woman whose expression betrays the anxiety of waiting for a child to return from the sea.

Calle Necochea, which meets Avenida Pedro de Mendoza at Vuelta de Rocha, is the street of Italian *cantinas* and late night entertainment. It is also the street where Aristotle Onassis lived in the days before he became a billionaire shipbuilder and the husband of Jackie Kennedy. It is one of La Boca's best loved yarns.

The Story of Aristotle Onassis

When Onassis was in his teens he emigrated to Argentina from the ravaged city of Smyrna in Turkey. He thought opportunity awaited him and he was right. He started as a boatman, ferrying people across the muddy Riachuelo under the Black Bridge.

Later, he started a cigarette manufacturing business (he rolled each cigarette by hand at the beginning). This enabled him to buy his first run-down old boat. The boat was restored and sold at a good profit, which proved to be more lucrative than cigarettes or telephones (he was also working nights in central Buenos Aires as foreman in charge of the telephone systems that were being installed during his tenure there). The rest, as they say, is history. Ask any local about the man and they'll point out the café he frequented and the room he rented in those days of great expectations. Budding shipping magnates and others all have a great time in the *cantinas* of Necochea Street.

La Boca Fútbol (Soccer) Stadium

While the Italians have given La Boca its most distinctive touches, the British too have left their mark. They introduced soccer to the Argentineans and two of the country's finest teams started in La Boca. The La Boca Club was started in 1905 by a group of men who played together in nearby Solís Square. The stadium at Calle Brandsen 805 is called the *Bombonera* (Candy Box) by locals. Inaugurated in 1940, the cement structure has a capacity of 70,000 persons.

Members of the La Boca Athletic Club participate in sports other than soccer. Basketball, cycling and *bochas*, an Argentinean version of bowling, are pursued with energy, but never with the zeal passion attached to *fútbol*. The *fútbol* rivalry between La Boca and River Plate (the other team that started here) is legendary, and their matches are always exciting to watch. As one Buenos Aires resident told me, *Para nosotros fútbol es como comer* (For us, fútbol is as important as eating). When the La Boca Juniors win in their weekly encounters with other First Division clubs, you'll surely spot the blue and gold colors of the Junior flag waving above the stadium. This is a great place to watch a game.

Lunch in La Boca

Have a slice of pizza or more likely a whole individual pie in a pan on Almirante Brown. This road parallel to Necochea is La Boca's main

shopping area and is well known for its pizza parlors. Men selling pizza on the streets of La Boca were a common sight even at the turn of the century. Hence the area considers itself the prime purveyor of this snack.

La Boca After Dark

The *cantinas* of Necochea are informal and lusty. If you are an extrovert and enjoy singing and dancing for your supper, by all means spend a night here. For specifics, check *Dining in La Boca*, page 129.

Palermo

Palermo, north of Recoleta and Palermo Chico, resembles many of Buenos Aires' middle class neighborhoods. What makes Palermo special is that it is home to a wonderful park, the city's zoo, planetarium, exposition hall, botanical garden, its loveliest race track and the polo fields. There is a used book fair along Avenida Libertador on weekends as well. Quiet weekdays, Palermo is crowded on weekends year-round.

Getting There

Check schedules with your concierge or in the sporting event listings in The Buenos Aires Herald.

It's easy to get to Palermo. The best way is to hop *Subte* Line D (Catedral-Pacífico) to the final stop, where you'll find yourself at Plaza Italia, the heart of Palermo. The ride takes 20 minutes. Buses 10, 152 and 60 leave from downtown as well.

Palermo Park

Head to the park during the week to avoid the crowds.

Inaugurated in 1875, this has been a favorite weekend getaway ever since. The land was once uninhabited marshlands. Fortunately for *porteños*, the dictator Juan Manuel de Rosas (who ruled for 30 years) decided to drain the area and build a palatial home on it. He had orange and magnolia trees planted as well as various exotic plants. After Rosas was overthrown in 1852, the property lay idle until President Sarmiento decided to turn it into a public park. The area was redesigned, filled with beautiful monuments and sculpted figures (most are gifts to the Argentine people from foreign countries) and opened by President Avellaneda.

The grounds are large, with five lakes and grassy fields for sunning, picnicking and soccer games. There are jogging and bicycling paths. You can rent bicycles near the park entrance and small rowboats or pedal crafts for a tour of the lakes.

The court was a gift from the city of Seville, Spain.

Some spots within the park are particularly lovely. Look for the **Patio Andaluz**, also called the Garden of Carnations. This small courtyard is lit by colonial lamps and has a central fountain surrounded by benches decorated with Spanish tiles.

The **Rosaleda** (Rosedale) is an elegant rose garden in the center of the park. The entire area is filled with beautiful sculpture and there are small, romantic tea rooms.

El Puente Blanco (The White Bridge) spans a portion of the lake near the Rosaleda and is marked by an enormous cage filled with colorful birds.

Lovers' Bridge

Local lore has dubbed El Puente Blanco "Lovers' Bridge." It seems that if you walk back and forth across it twice with the same person, that person will become your lover.

If you cross the bridge and follow the red brick road, you'll soon find yourself in the **Jardín de los Poetas** (Poet's Garden), marked by a bust of the Italian poet Dante Alighieri.

Before you leave the park, pay a visit to the **Japanese Garden** on Calle Casares and its authentic tea house. Within the garden there is a pond with five small islands joined by bridges. The charming rock-garden pagoda creates a lovely setting for the Tea House, where the atmosphere couldn't be more idyllic. In the evenings the Tea House gets rather crowded and it pays to call ahead (☎ 785-7049 for reservations). Really lovely!

The Tea House is open from 10 am-8 pm every day except Monday.

Touring the Park

An inexpensive way to get an overview of the park is to hire a *mateo*, a horse-drawn carriage, for a 20-minute tour of the highlights. You can then head back to your favorite spots on foot.

Mateos are hired at Plaza Italia or Avenida Sarmiento near the entrance to the zoo.

Look for the "Spaniard's Monument" at the entrance on Avenida Libertador. It was a gift from Spain for Argentina's centennial.

The **Jardín Zoológico** (Palermo Zoo) is a great stop if you are traveling with kids – or even if you aren't. Just over 100 years old, it specializes in South American wildlife, although it has species from all over the globe. The original animals were bought in Germany, and over the years the zoo has grown to house more than 100 species, plus birds and reptiles. It's hard to see lions and panthers in cages, but the architects have attempted to house the animals in a setting as close to their natural habitat as possible. The llamas live in an Inca temple and the Asian elephants inhabit a Hindu temple.

Don't miss the majestic condors, native birds of the Cordilleras, which are difficult to raise in captivity.

The **Sarmiento Theater** stages plays for kids and games and events that they will enjoy. If walking is too much, hop on the mini-train that leaves continuously from the gate on Avenida Las Heras. The entrance to the zoo is at Avenida Las Heras and Sarmiento.

Open daily 8 am-8 pm, summer, and 8-6, winter.

The **Jardín Botánico** (Botanical Garden) is across from the zoo on Avenida Las Heras. This 150-acre retreat is a frequent destination for *porteños* seeking a restful spot to read a book or take a nap in the sun. You can wander through the grounds, home to over 6,000 different species of plants, and sit and relax throughout. There are lovely sculptures, fountains and

greenhouses. One personal favorite is the Pond of the Water Lilies near the entrance.

A small museum, **Museo Botánico**, houses plants and trees native to Argentina as well as exhibits explaining the uses of sugar cane, jute and cocoa.

Entrance is free. Open 8 am-12 and 2-6 pm. Closed Wednesdays.

The **Galileo Galilei Planetarium** at Avenidas Figueroa Alacorte and Sarmiento in Palermo Woods is well worth a visit if only to see the sky of the southern hemisphere, which is very different from that of the north. Look for the Southern Cross. No children under age seven are allowed. Outside, stop for a look at the sundial, which as a gift from Japan.

Shows on Saturday and Sunday. Check schedules.

The Predio Ferial de Palermo (Palermo Fairgrounds), across from the zoo, is the site of expositions year-round. While attending a car or toy show may not be exciting, if you are in Buenos Aires in July or August when *La Rural* is underway, you should consider attending. It is an agricultural exposition with exhibits from all over the world. Most interesting are the riding shows, featuring *gauchos*. It's not something urban North Americans get to see often.

The **Argentine Racetrack** and **National Polo Fields** are also in Palermo, a few blocks north of the park on Avenida Libertador.

The Parks of Buenos Aires

Buenos Aires is a city of plazas and parks, filled with striking monuments, cool fountains and winding flower-bedecked paths. Many of the

parks have sporting facilities such as golf courses, tennis courts and bike paths. Others host art and book fairs on weekends.

Parque Tres de Febrero, Avenida Presidente Pedro Montt at Avenida Infanta Isabel, is not far from the Rosaleda in Los Bosques de Palermo. Aquatic cycles and canoes used by dreamy lovers and families at leisure join swans as the primary attractions.

Parque Jorge Newbury, Avenida Figueroa Alcorta 3585. This large municipal park not far from the Aeroparque Jorge Newbury has bicycle paths and outdoor tennis courts.

Flea Markets

The following are flea markets that go on regularly. The merchandise runs the gamut in cost and quality, but the atmosphere is always 100% *porteño*.

The Caminito Street Art Fair, La Boca. Every day from 11 am-7 pm. One of the best street fairs in the city, the colorful tin houses are the inspiration for many of the small oils and watercolors on sale here. Prices range from a few dollars to sky high.

The Plaza Dorrego Fair, Defensa and Humbert I in San Telmo. 10 am-5 pm, Saturday and Sunday. This is the foremost place for antique hunting. Street performers will entertain you as you browse.

The Parque Lezama Artisan's Fair, Martín Garcia and Paseo Colón. Weekends 11 am-6

pm. This is a weekend ritual for the avant-garde. Another artisan's fair is also held weekends on the **Plaza Alvear**, Avenidas Pueyrredón and Libertador.

The Plaza Manuel Belgrano, Avenida Juramento and Obligado in Belgrano. Weekends 11 am-6 pm. This is another lively art fair with a bohemian flavor.

The Plazoleta Santa Fe, Avenida Santa Fe at Urriarte in Palermo. Weekends, 11 am-6 pm. Another fair worth a visit.

The Plaza Houssay, Avenida Córdoba and Junín. Weekdays 11 am-6 pm. This is a popular midweek place to visit.

Book Fairs

Most books are second-hand and in Spanish. If you read Spanish, you may find a few gems. You may run across a few books in English, as well as some eye-catching prints and posters. Fairs are held Monday through Friday from 10 am to 6 pm on the **Plaza Lavalle** between Lavalle and Libertad; on the **Plaza Almagro** at Presidente J.D. Perón and Salguero; and on the **Plazoleta del Tango** at Avenida Corrientes and Bouchard, not far from Luna Park.

We picked up a first edition of an early Borges book. A real gem.

Spectator Sports

Soccer (Fútbol)

As is true throughout South America and Europe, soccer is a national passion in Argen-

tina. They have won two World Cups, and barely lost in the 1990 Championship game (though the Argentinean team did not fare so well in the 1994 World Cup). Diego Maradona, the Argentine star, ranks among the finest players of recent times. Children learn to play soccer as soon as they can walk and clubs function in much the same way as US Little Leagues. There are many local teams in Buenos Aires, but the most intense rivalry is between the La Boca and River Plate teams. Matches are held from September to June on Sunday afternoons at the **River Plate Stadium** at Avenida Figueroa Alcorta 7597 in Núñez (☎ 4785-1019). Tickets should be purchased in advance (your concierge may be able to help you here). The stadium seats 38,000 and has standing room for an equal number of fans.

The stadium is a 10-minute cab ride.

Polo

The British influence is huge in Argentina and polo has been played here since 1875. The nation's top stars rank among the world's finest players. Matches, including the International Cup, are played at **The National Polo Fields** on Avenida Libertador in Palermo. There are two playing fields and a grandstand for spectators. Championship games are played in November and December. You will be surprised at how exciting a match can be and by the amazing skill of the players. Before you know it, you'll be rooting for one of the teams just as you would back home.

Check listings in The Buenos Aires Herald.

Pato (Duck)

Pato, a sport native to Argentina, is played on horseback. It originated in the early 17th century with the *gauchos* and *criollos* who lived on the *pampas*. At that time, a duck was placed into a leather bag and tossed from teammate to teammate until a goal was scored. The game was so rough that players were trampled to death and it had to be banned. Aficionados revised the rules to create a gentler version and the sport was revived in the 1940s. Though just as fast-paced as before, *pato* is now played by four-man teams and the duck has been replaced by a leather ball with handles. The object is to score by throwing the ball through a net hung from a field post – much like a basketball net.

Matches are held at *estancias* near the city and occasionally at the Palermo Polo Fields. Check listings in the *Buenos Aires Herald* or with your concierge or the tourist office.

Horseracing

Weekly handicap magazines are ubiquitous at kiosks.

The **Hipódromo Argentino** in Palermo is the scene of big money races and assorted championships. It has dirt tracks and seating for 70,000. Admission runs between $12 and $24 for seats. The minimum bet is $2. Check the *Buenos Aires Herald* for schedules or call the racetrack at ☎ 4774-6807. Good luck!

The **Jockey Track** in San Isidro is another popular track. Races are run on grass and are generally held on Wednesdays and during the

The suburb of San Isidro is easily reached by cab or the Bartolome Mitre commuter railroad that runs to Tigre.

weekend. Check the *Buenos Aires Herald* for schedules or call the track at ☎ 4743-4011.

Boxing

Boxing matches are held at the **Luna Park Stadium**, located downtown at the corner of Corrientes and Bouchard. Fights are usually held on Wednesday and Saturday evenings. Tickets run between $6 and $15 for ordinary bouts. Major events will cost significantly more.

Other spectator sports taking place in or near the city include tennis, rugby, cricket and auto racing. Check the *Buenos Aires Herald* for listings.

Participant Sports

If walking through Buenos Aires does not satisfy your need for physical activity, you'll find plenty of more active alternatives, including biking or jogging through Palermo and Costanera Norte.

Tennis

Clay courts are the norm here. Call in advance to reserve a court and to confirm fees.

Buenos Aires Lawn & Tennis Club, *Olleros 1510, ☎ 4772-9227.*
San Remo Tennis Club*, Chacabuco 1260, ☎ 362-5399.*
La Mirage Tennis Club, *Salta 1275, ☎ 423-9332.*
Solís Tennis Courts*, Calle Solís 1252, ☎ 427-5400.*

Squash

***Tribunales Club de Squash**, Montevideo 556, ☎ 49-8358.*
***Hipo's Tennis Squash,** Avenida Libertador 6301. ☎ 4781-8910.*

Golf

Golf courses are located at private clubs near the city. You may be able to play at some of them during the week. For general information on golf in Argentina, contact the **Argentine Golf Association** at Avenida Corrientes 538, ☎ 4325-1113.

***Boulogne Golf Club**, Boulogne, ☎ 4765-7525.*
***San Isidro Golf Club,** San Isidro, ☎ 4766-6625.*
***Campo Municipal de Golf**, Bosques de Palermo, ☎ 4772-7576.*
***Driving Range,** Costanera Norte.*

Horseback Riding

***Centro de Actividades Hípicas,** Avenida Figueroa Alcorta, ☎ 4772-3826.*

Ice Skating

***Frappe**, Avenida Sarmiento 1662. Open 10 am-1 am.*
***Madison Rink**, Avenida Las Heras 3060. Open 9 am-midnight.*

Swimming Pools Plus

Pools (indoor, outdoor, heated, etc.) are located at sports centers in different parts of the city, as well as in many hotels. Besides swimming pools, they have many other sports facilities.

Windsurfers can get in some practice at the **Parque Norte** at the intersection of Calles Cantilo and Güiraldes in Costanera Norte. **Parque Jorge Newbery** is at Avenida Figueroa Alcorta 3800 in Palermo. **Parque Presidente Sarmiento**, at Avenida Del Tejar, 4600. This park has several swimming pools and tennis, basketball and handball courts. **KDT Sports Park,** Avenida Figueroa Alcorta. KDT has a running track, an indoor pool and several tennis courts.

Two Special Attractions Outside the City

La Reserva Ecológica de la Costanera Sur

This ecological reserve is a wetlands park located on the waterfront south of the city. It is a five-minute taxi ride from Plaza de Mayo but you can walk there in under 30 minutes. Stretching for over two miles, this network of lagoons and marshes was created in the 1970s, as the beaches that once lined the southern shore became polluted. Dikes were built of landfill refuse; then the river's silt and mother nature took over. There are trails along the dikes and the area is filled with flowers. Birds roam freely, unafraid of human visitors. Cranes, swans and colorful birds we'd never seen before soar through the air over the tall grasses. Open daily from 8 am to 6 pm. Guided Tour Sunday afternon at 3:30. Closed major holidays.

Daytrip to Tigre

Gateway to the Delta Bonarense

Tigre, a suburb of Buenos Aires located on the delta formed at the confluence of the Paraná and Plate Rivers, is a popular getaway from the city, particularly on warm spring and summer weekends. At the turn of the century it was the favorite summer retreat of Buenos Aires high society. Vestiges of this period are evident in its lovely *fin de siecle* mansions, a fine example of which is the **ex Tigre Club**, which now functions as a cultural center. These are the vacation homes and private clubs of wealthy *porteños,* who spend long weekends and school holidays here. City dwelling *porteños* flock to Tigre on the weekends to enjoy its abundant green spaces and recreational areas, and watersports, such as boating, fishing and waterskiing.

Mar del Plata eventually replaced Tigre as the summer retreat of the very rich.

Pack a picnic lunch to eat along the grassy areas of the **Paseo Victoria**, a garden promenade that runs alongside the river or on one of the catamarans or launches that offer trips through the delta and nearby islands. These depart from the docks in the **Parque de la Costa**, which is just outside the train station. Also here is the **Mercado de Frutos de Tigre.** Though originally, as its name suggests, a produce market dedicated exclusively to fruits and vegetables grown throughout the delta, local handicrafts and *típicos* have for the most part replaced local produce as the main wares sold

here. The waterfront promenade is delightful for strolling. Museums include the **Museo Naval de la Armada Argentina** and the **Museo de la Reconquista**, both of which are dedicated to Argentina's military history. Tigre also boasts an number of fine restaurants and confiterías, most of which are along the Paseo Victoria. A daytrip to Tigre is a relaxing way to spend a summer afternoon.

Getting There

Tigre, just 15 kilometers from Buenos Aires, is easily reached by commuter rail from Retiro Station in under 45 minutes and for less than $5 roundtrip. The most scenic route is aboard the **Tren de la Costa** (☎ 4732-6000) which, as its name suggests, travels along the River Plate. You can get off at any of the 16 stops between Retiro Station and the Delta Station in Tigre. Many of the stations have been beautifully refurbished. Worthwhile stops include the **Borges Station** in Olivos, the **Anchorena Station,** and the **Barrancas Station.** All are within walking distance of the river and recreational facilities are available at the latter two. In **San Isidro** you can explore the historic downtown area and stroll past the marina and the prestigious (and totally exclusive) **Club Náutico San Isidro**.

Tourist information should be available at the stations.

Driving to Tigre is not complicated either. Simply follow Avenida del Libertador north out of the city and it will lead you into Tigre.

Buenos Aires Museums

Buenos Aires is a museum buff's delight. The city boasts dozens of museums with collections dedicated to art, both classical and pop, sculpture, history, weapons, coins, science and theater, to name but a few. The city proudly upholds her reputation for classical art.

We discuss many museums, but by no means cover them all. Hours and phone numbers were accurate at press time, but double-check them before setting out since they have a tendency to change!

★ Did You Know?

Buenos Aires was also the first city in Latin America to host an exhibition of pop art by Andy Warhol.

Just as Paris was a center for scores of expatriate artists, Buenos Aires could boast of her own Delacroix – **Prilidiano Pueyrredón**, a major figure whose vast historical tableaus tell the colonial history of Argentina and resurrect from the ashes the visages of the haughty and handsome nobility of her early years.

In recent years art in Argentina has taken on a more embattered sensibility. This feeling is most evident in the art of **Urruchua**, a member of the old school of moderns who paints with his Basque patriotism on the tip of his brush. In a great number of Argentinean artists, this embattlement has its source in the nation's troubled history. The influx of immigrant artists, including a large number of Asians, has added a new dimension to the cultural scene.

Buenos Aires has a wonderful collection of sculpture, both small and monumental in size,

including an impressive collection of pieces by **Rodin**. Religious art is another genre where superb examples of native talent are to be seen. Much of this art comes from Peru and is of the Cuzco school. A great deal of religious art was brought to Argentina from Spain and Portugal as well.

Since the museums are scattered throughout the downtown area and in the *barrios*, you can combine your neighborhood tours with museum visits.

EL MUSEO NACIONAL DE BELLAS ARTES
Avenida Libertador 1473, Recoleta. ☎ *4803-0802. Tuesday-Friday 12:30 to 7:30 pm; Saturday 9:30 am to 7:30 pm.*

The National Fine Arts Museum is one of the finest in South America. If you have time to visit just one museum, this should be it. Be sure to allow yourself plenty of time. Comparable to the best museums in Europe and North America, its collections can't be seen in a single day, making a bit of pre-planning necessary.

The museum was founded in 1895 by a group of intellectuals who decided that the city desperately needed a space to house its growing collection of art treasures. The original museum was on Calle Florida, but it quickly outgrew that space. Its collections were later installed in the large Belle Epoque building which you see today.

The museum's 34 halls are overflowing with masterpieces from every epoch and culture.

Most outstanding among them are the Rodin sculptures. His "Hand of God" and the "Head of Balzac" are as dramatic as the "Danaides" are sinuous and beautiful. The French Impressionism collection is also quite noteworthy, with works by Degas, Corot, Courbet, Manet, Sisley and Van Gogh. The five rooms devoted to Degas are a wonderful surprise, and include several pieces from his "Ballerina" studies. Leger, Modigliani, Bourdin, Daumier, and Pissaro round out the collection.

The museum also has an admirable collection of 16th- and 17th-century art, with works by Rembrandt and Rubens as well as Gobelins tapestries. Spanish paintings include El Greco's "Jesus on the Mount of Olives" and an entire room devoted to Goya.

Contemporary art has not been overlooked. Paintings by Othon Friesz, Giorgio Morandi, Kandinski and Klee, as well as some lesser known pieces by De Chirico, Nevelson, Picasso and Franz Kline make this a notable collection. Located in another wing of the museum is a stupendous collection of Argentinean art, which is not unlike French Impressionism, although the subject matter might be the *pampas*, or the privileged ladies of early Buenos Aires society. The historical painters and portraitists were instrumental in creating the true Argentinean style.

✻ Tip

Key artists to look for are Emilio Pettorutti, Ernesto de la Cárcova, Pueyrrdón, Morel, Pellegrini, Butler and Panozzi.

EL MUSEO HISTÓRICO NACIONAL

Defensa 1600, San Telmo. ☎ 4307-4457. Guided tours in English can be arranged. Tuesday-Friday, 2-6 pm; Sundays 3:30-7 pm.

The National History Museum was closed for renovations at the time of our last visit.

Housed in the Italianate Villa Lezama built in 1857, the National History Museum traces the history of Argentina in a series of displays, each devoted to a stage of the nation's development – the Discovery, the Conquest, the Viceroyship and Jesuit Missionaries, the English Invasions, and the Wars of Independence. Highlights include bolts from Christopher Columbus' ship, the *Santa Maria*, an original map of Buenos Aires drawn by Juan de Garay, a fascinating Indian sundial from the 16th century, and the emblem of Potosí, a shield worked in silver and gold depicting South America that was presented to General Belgrano by the citizens of Potosí, Bolivia.

EL MUSEO DE MOTIVOS ARGENTINOS JOSÉ HERNÁNDEZ

Avenida del Libertador 2373, Recoleta. ☎ 4802-7294. Wednesday-Friday 1-7 pm; weekends 3-7 pm. Admission free on Wednesdays.

The José Hernández Museum of Argentine Folklore was donated to the city in 1984 by Don Felix Bunge, a conscientious statesman, to

ensure the preservation of the folklore and legends of the Argentine countryside and native population. Marvelous displays of engraved *mates* and *bombillas*, cowboy belts and spurs highlight the great artistry of the silversmiths of the *pampas*. Other *gaucho* paraphernalia include ponchos, rawhide traveling trunks, saddles from Brazil and Uruguay, and handmade **boleadores** which are lariats with hard leather balls attached to the ends.

Among the most interesting pieces on display are pottery, textiles, wool and leather ornaments. There is also a fine exhibit dedicated to typical musical instruments such as the Criollo Harp; small guitars known as Charangos which are played in the northwest as well as other Andean countries; and drums, music boxes, Indian harps and flutes from Corrientes and Santiago del Estero.

MUSEO HISTÓRICO DEL CABILDO Y LA REVOLUCIÓN DE MAYO

Calle Bolívar 65. ☎ 4334-1782. Open: Tuesday-Friday 12:30 to 7 pm; Sunday 3 to 7 pm

This white-washed colonial building, easily the quaintest in Buenos Aires, was built in 1725 and was the site of the original junta. It's clock tower and arched porticos have become symbols of the city. Occupied by the British in the 1800s, it underwent many architectural changes until it was declared a national museum in 1960. Today it houses a fine collection of artifacts from Argentina's colonial period including mili-

tary weapons, flags, treaties and religious art from the Jesuit missions.

Most impressive is the Sala Capítular, where the meetings leading to Argentina's independence were held. It has been faithfully restored to recreate the spirit of that period.

EL MUSEO DE LA CASA ROSADA

H. Yrigoyen 219, entrance at Calle Balcarce 24. ☎ 4343-3051. Monday-Friday (closed Wednesday), 10 am-6 pm; Sundays 2-6 pm. Guided tours at 4 pm.

Located not far from the Cabildo across from the Plaza de Mayo, the Government House Museum is housed in what was originally a fort and later became the Customs House. It is a fascinating building with subterranean passageways and cavernous chambers. Sections of the original walls are still standing. The 19 underground galleries dating from the early part of the 17th century were discovered in 1942. The museum features memorabilia from the different administrations throughout Argentina's history starting with the founding of Buenos Aires in 1580 by Juan de Garay.

EL MUSEO MITRE

Avenida San Martín 336. ☎ 4394-8670. Tuesday-Friday, 1-6 pm.

This is the former home of the much celebrated general who went on to found the intellectual daily newspaper *La Nacion* in addition to serving as President of the Republic. The museum, much of which is just as it was when the General was living there, is best known for its

library, coin and map collection, and its collection of historic documents.

EL MUSEO DE LA CIUDAD DE BUENOS AIRES

Alsina 412, Barrio Sur. ☎ 4313-2123. Monday-Friday, 11 am-7 pm; Sunday 3-7 pm. Free admission on Wednesday.

The residence of an upper class family at the turn of the century has been recreated. A rotating display of vintage photographs features scenes of the period, including bandonéon players who live on *amor perdido* (lost love) and the *centavos* in their cigar boxes, tango dancers and throngs of youth spilling out of night-time cafés.

INSTITUTO SANMARTINIANO-CASA GRAND BOURG

Calle Rufino de Elizalde 2800 (Palermo Chico). Monday-Friday 9-12 noon; 2-5 pm. Weekends 2-5 pm.

Located in the lovely Palermo Chico barrio. San Martín was the Argentinean hero.

General San Martín's home in Boulogne Sur Mer, France where he lived in exile from 1834 to 1848, has been faithfully reproduced in this two-story museum founded in 1946. The San Martín Academy and Library are on the ground floor, while documents, writings and other of the General's personal effects are on display upstairs.

MUSEO DE ARTE HISPANOAMÉRICANO ISAAC FERNÁNDEZ BLANCO

Suipacha 1422. ☎ 4327-0228. Tuesday-Sunday, 3-8 pm. Admission $2 (Thursday free).

Set in a Spanish-Baroque Villa complete with courtyard and colorful Talavera tiles, the

Museum of Hispanic American Art is home to an extensive collection of colonial art from throughout South America. Among its collections are religious art from the Cuzco School as well as Misiones, traditional Jacaranda furniture from Brazil, beautifully ornate *peinetones* – the tortoise shell hairpieces favored by wealthy señoras, and *mates* and *bombillas* in all sorts of fanciful shapes.

EL MUSEO DE TEATRO COLÓN

Toscanini 1180. ☎ 4382-5414. Monday-Friday, 10 am-6 pm. Guided Tours ($5) every hour on the hour: 9 am-4 pm, Monday-Friday, Saturdays 9-12 noon.

You'll enjoy this tour even if you're not an opera buff.

This small museum within Buenos Aires' world famous Colón Opera House features a collection of original scripts, photographs, instruments, costumes and documents associated with the artists who have performed here since 1908. We urge you to take advantage of the guided tours offered every hour.

EL MUSEO ETNOGRÁFICO JUAN B. AMBROSETTI

Moreno 350, San Telmo. ☎ 4331-7788. Monday-Friday, 10 am to 7 pm.

The Juan B. Ambrosetti Ethnographic Museum boasts one of the most important anthropological/ethnographic collections in the world, with over 35,000 pieces, all of which have been classified into groups such as anthropology, archaeology, craftsmanship and folklore. Artifacts from early South American cultures, especially those of Peru and Patagonia include interesting ceramics from the Andes. Also of interest are

urns from as far away as Micronesia, Melanesia and Polynesia, and a Buddhist altar over 1,000 years old from the Shin-su sect in Japan.

EL MUSEO DE BELLAS ARTES DE LA BOCA
Avenida Pedro de Mendoza 1835. ☎ 4301-1080. Tuesday-Friday, 9 am-5 pm; weekends 10 am-5 pm.

Contemporary Argentine artists including Pío Collivadino, Eduardo Sivori, and sculptors Yrutia and Rocha are well represented at La Boca's Museum of Fine Arts. The museum is housed in the former residence of the artist Benito Quinquela Martín, who bequeathed the building to the city in his will. Featured in the museum's collection is the painter's series of 11 paintings, "Cemetery of Ships," as well as a collection of wooden mastheads salvaged from Italian ships during the last century.

EL MUSEO NACIONAL DE ARTE ORIENTAL Y DECORATIVO
Avenida Libertador 1902, Recoleta. ☎ 4802-6606. Monday to Saturday, 3-7 pm; guided tours Wednesday and Saturday at 3 and 6 pm. Admission $2.

The National Museum of Oriental and Decorative Art is located in the Errazuriz Palace, residence of Chilean Diplomat Matos Errazuriz and his wife until 1937 when it was purchased by the Argentine government. It is actually two museums in one. The Museum of Oriental Art is on the top floor and features splendid examples of Chinese, Hindu, Tibetan, Japanese and Islamic art. Collections include silver, copper and bronze coins from the Han Dynasty circa 200 B.C.; ceramic dogs from the Ching Dynasty;

Samurai weapons and Katana sabres of the Shoguns; Turkish swords and scimitars; Nepalese and Tibetan religious artifacts; and a collection of fifth-century Buddhas from India.

The Museum of Decorative Art is on the ground floor and features dozens of Argentine family portraits, immense gold and silver collections, and fabulous art and furniture from around the world.

EL MUSEO HISTÓRICO Y NUMISMÁTICO DEL BANCO DE LA NACIÓN ARGENTINA
Bartolomé Mitre 362. ☎ *4342-4041. Request a private tour on extension 607. Mon-.Fri. 10 am-4 pm.*

The Museum of History and Numismatics of the Argentine National Bank is located in the huge marble and stone edifice built by architect Alejandro Bustillo on the site of the original Colón Theater. On display are the earliest Argentine currency and documents relating to numismatics.

★ Did You Know?

The fountain in the main room of the first floor was a gift from the Bank of Uruguay.

Art Galleries

In addition to scores of museums, Buenos Aires is also home to some fine private galleries. Here a just a few of our favorites.

Check a recent issue of Where *for a more complete listing.*

ZURBARÁN GALLERY
Cerrito 1522. ☎ 4815-1556. Monday-Friday, 10:30 am to 9 pm, Saturday 10:30 am to 1 pm.

The best of Argentina's creative talent is featured at the Zurbarán. Exhibits favor the more traditional contemporary artists who find their inspiration in the *pampas* and daily life of the *gauchos*, as well as the Spanish Masters Goya and Velasquez.

COLECCIÓN ALVEAR DE ZURBARÁN
Avenida Alvear 1658. ☎ 4811-3004. Monday-Friday 10:30 am-9 pm, Saturday 10:30 am-1 pm.

Sister to the Zurbarán, the Colección Alvear features works by well-known Argentinean and European artists. Among the artists represented here is Fernando Fader (1882-1935). Considered by many to be Argentina's premiere artist, he is best known for his scenes of early Argentina.

PRAXIS
Arenales 1311. ☎ 4812-6254. Monday-Friday 10 am-8 pm; Saturday 10 am-2 pm.

A leader in avant-garde Latin American art, Praxis has branches in São Paulo, Santiago, Lima and Mexico City. Praxis has earned an international reputation for the fine artists it represents, including the South American painters Botero, Tamayo, Matta and Rivera. Original works as well as outstanding lithographs and screenprints are featured here.

WILDENSTEIN
Córdoba 618.

Finally, a member of a group of galleries frequented by sophisticated patrons of the arts the world over, this is one of the most revered names in the world of art. Highly professional; all sales are accompanied by a certificate of authenticity.

Buenos Aires After Dark

Every time we visit Buenos Aires we are amazed at what a late night city it is. After midnight, as we're starting to wilt, the *porteños* are still going strong, crowding the clubs and discos, theaters and coffee houses night after night. Since this is true year-round, even on weekday nights, we have concluded that *porteños* function on very little sleep.

Tip

Since you are on vacation, you can reset your inner clock by taking a late afternoon nap. That way you'll be awake and ready for a night on the town as you sit down to dinner at about 10 pm.

Your evening options are many. The city offers fine opera and classical ballet, sultry tango shows, discos, and over 1,000 cinemas showing first-run films, undubbed. You can spend an evening dancing on the tables at a *cantina* in La Boca or on the dance floor of a swank Recoleta nightclub, browsing in a late night bookstore, or people watching at a sidewalk café. Sporting events are held in the evenings too.

Entertainment Information

The concierge at your hotel should be able to provide you with information about opera, ballet and theater performances as well as reserve tickets. The same holds true for major sporting events. There are several publications that list events and performances throughout the city. You can pick these up at virtually any kiosk.

The Buenos Aires Herald, founded in 1876, is an informative English-language daily and your best choice for finding out what's going on. The entertainment section provides a complete up-to-date listing of what's playing in the cinemas, theaters and clubs throughout town. It costs $1 and is available at newsstands.

Buenos Aires Guest, an English-language booklet issued monthly, includes information on theater, music, sports and special events as well as a dining and nightlife guide. Plus, it's free.

Theaters & Concert Halls

Buenos Aires is an important stop for international artists. Of course, the chance of your getting last-minute tickets will depend on who is performing.

✻ Tip

If you're considering a trip to the theater, remember that most performances are in Spanish, though there are also some English-speaking theater troupes who perform in the city. Check listings in *The Buenos Aires Herald*.

TEATRO COLÓN (Colón Opera House)
Plaza Lavalle
☎ *4382-5414*
Box Office: 10 am-8 pm, Tuesday-Sunday.

Your hotel concierge may be able to get you better seats than if you handle it yourself. If you want to do it on your own, check the diagram in the box office for seat availability.

The Teatro Colón, on the Plaza Lavalle, is an opera house on a grand scale and the most opulent in the country, if not in South America as a whole. Often compared to La Scala in Milan, the acoustics in its seven-tier auditorium are nearly perfect. Arturo Toscanini, María Callas, Enrico Caruso, Luciano Pavarotti, Zubin Mehta, Leontyne Price and Leona Mitchell are among the international masters who have performed here since the theater opened its doors on May 25, 1908. The Buenos Aires Philharmonic performs here regularly, as do touring opera companies and orchestras from around the world.

Be sure to take a guided tour of the Opera House, offered several times daily, and visit the Colón Museum. See Sightseeing *above for details.*

The theater is closed throughout most of January and February and reopens in March with a limited summer schedule. The season is in full swing during the winter (June-August). Check the *Buenos Aires Herald* and *Buenos Aires Guest* for listings and ticket availabilities; or call the box office. Ticket prices usually range from $40 to $50 for an orchestra seat to $16 for a *paraíso* or balcony seat. Standing room tickets are $5.

TEATRO NACIONAL CERVANTES
(Cervantes National Theater)
Libertad 815
☎ *4816-4224*

Since it first opened its doors in 1921, the Cervantes has consistently brought fine theater to the forefront of the city's cultural life. One of the most important theaters in Argentina, it is home to the National Theater Company, distinguished for the quality of its productions.

EL CENTRO CULTURAL GENERAL SAN MARTIN *(The San Martín Cultural Center)*
Sarmiento 1551
☎ *4374-12511*

Several theaters, including the Teatro Municipal General San Martín, and concert halls are housed in this large complex. Often featured here are classics such as "King Lear" and "Antigone," as well as works by contemporary Argentine playwrights and composers. Concerts and plays are occasionally performed for free.

EL TEATRO COLISEO *(Coliseum Theater)*
M.T. de Alvear 1125
☎ *4816-5943*

This is another great forum for world class events and a particularly wonderful place to see the ballet.

Natalia Makorova and Julio Bocca were recently guest performers here.

THE LUNA PARK STADIUM
Corrientes and Bouchard
For information call the Colón Theater Box Office.

Luna Park is the setting of a great many special events. The Colón Theater is responsible for most of the programs here, as the stadium serves as its annex. When Luciano Pavarotti appeared here, the need for a stadium of its size was obvious.

THE RIVER PLATE STADIUM
Avenida F. Alcorte 7597

More than just the home of Argentina's favorite soccer team, the La Boca Juniors, the River Plate has hosted international rock stars, including Bruce Springsteen. Consult *The Buenos Aires Herald* or *Where* for current performances.

BELGRANO AUDITORIUM
Virrey Loreto 2348
☎ *4783-1783*

Located in the charming suburb of Belgrano, this is one of the city's finest concert halls. Musical fare runs the gamut from chamber music to symphonies.

The Cinema

Going to the movies is a real treat in Buenos Aires. There are hundreds of movie theaters, with *multi-cines* becoming just as popular here as they are in the US. Much more formal than back home, many have bars and the ushers actually show you to your seat. Movies are often shown in their original language and new releases make it here quite quickly. Cinemas are concentrated along Lavalle, Corrientes and Callao.

Check The Buenos Aires Herald *for current listings.*

Tango

More than anything else, Argentina is known for the tango, that hauntingly seductive dance in which the partners seem to stalk each other, alternating in the roles of hunter and willing

partner. However, the tango is not just a dance, it is a means of expression which may be in the form of an instrumental composition, a song or as it is most commonly thought of, a dance. Oftentimes, it is a combination of the three. Developed over decades, the tango was brought to the limelight by famed singer Carlos Gardel, who ignited the salons of Paris and Europe in the early part of this century. By the late 1930s the tango was immortalized by Hollywood in a number of films.

Tangos are nearly always narratives set to music – invariably melancholy, bittersweet songs of love and passion. These tales are translated by the long gliding steps and closely entwined bodies of the dancers. The tango is a ritual dance. At times the man assumes the part of *guapo* (dandy), who seduces innocent maidens. At other times the primly dressed young ladies do a "church social" version of the dance, which is quite tame in comparison.

An evening spent at any of the *tanguerías* or folkloric clubs in Buenos Aires guarantees a glittering show, with the performers taking the audience through a century of tango styles. Well-regarded musicians often accompany the dancers. The accordion-like *bandoneón* is the most typical of the instruments in a tango ensemble. At the finale, most clubs encourage the audience to join the dancers onstage for a *simple* tango. However, there is really no such thing. The tango is a difficult dance to learn

well, but you will have a great deal of fun trying.

Most *tanguerías* are in San Telmo around Calles Balcarce and Chile. Many feature dinner and a show. Cover charges may be as much as $50 or $60 without dinner and close to $100 with it. Call ahead for show times as schedules often vary from night to night. The following is an overview of some of our favorites. All accept major credit cards.

✻ Tip

Keep your eyes open for tango composer and musician Astor Piazzola – he is the most acclaimed tango artist in the world today. You would be lucky indeed to catch one of his performances.

El VIEJO ALMACÉN

Av. Independencia, corner of Balcarce, San Telmo
☎ 4307-7388
Show times: 9:30 pm, additional show Friday & Saturday 11:45 pm

El Viejo Almacén has been officially declared a cultural landmark.

After closing its doors for several years, on our last visit we were happy to discover that El Viejo Almacén had reopened. Many a *porteño* will tell you that you haven't truly experienced Buenos Aires until you've spent an evening at El Viejo Almacén. We have to agree. Often referred to as "The Temple of Tango," the city's most legendary tango artists, dancers and musicians, have performed here and continue to do so today. Shows feature classic tango with

a small orchestra or ensemble, singers and dance groups. Fine continental cuisine is featured on the menu, but the real reason to come here is for the show.

ARMENONVILLE
Av. Alvear 1891, Recoleta
☎ 4804-1033
Show times: Monday to Saturday 10:20 pm; additional show Friday & Saturday at 11:20 pm
Admission: $50 show and cocktail or $95 for dinner and the show.

It was on the stage at Armenonville that the legendary Carlos Gardel began his rise to fame. One of the most luxurious nightclubs of Buenos Aires' belle epoque of the second and third decades of the 20th century, Armenonville catered to the city's wealthiest residents, featuring the top tango performers of the moment. Though international tourists now make up the better part of Armenonville's clientele, management has endeavored to create a show worthy of Gardel's legacy.

✻ Tip

Take advantage of Armenonville's afternoon dance class. Though it is unlikely that you will master the dance in an afternoon, your understanding and appreciation for the tango as an artform will be enhanced.

CASABLANCA
Balcarce 668, San Telmo
☎ 4331-4621 (reservations requested)
Show times: Monday-Friday, 10 pm
Saturday, 8:30 pm & 10:30 pm

Casablanca ranks high among the *tanguerías* in Buenos Aires. A frequent guest is President Carlos Saul Menem, who often brings foreign heads of state here for a taste of Argentine culture. Apart from foreign dignitaries, Eric Clapton, Oliver Stone, David Rockefeller and Robert Duval figure among the many who have enjoyed the evening shows featuring over 40 musicians and dancers performing a series of tangos, as well as folkloric dances and music of the Andes and *pampas*. Admission includes open bar and appetizers. Seating is arranged theater style, with an orchestra level as well as mezzanine.

LA VENTANA
Balcarce 425, San Telmo
☎ 4334-1314 (reservations requested)
Show times: Monday-Thursday, Sunday 8 pm; Friday & Saturday 7:30 & 11 pm

If you can't get in here, try Moliere next door.

La Ventana features an impressive roster of visiting singers and dancers from the South American circuit. Its wide repertoire of European and popular as well as folkloric music has an international appeal. Admission is $40 per person.

BAR SUR
Estados Unidos 299, San Telmo
☎ *4362-6086*

Local tango aficionados claim that Bar Sur is one of the few spots where you can see pure tango rather than a show geared for tourists. This is the best recommendation a place can have. Drinks and a cold buffet are available.

CALLE DE LOS ANGELES
Calle Chile 318
☎ *4361-3633*

Located in a lovely courtyard, Calle de Los Angeles is a fine low-key spot for dinner. There is usually a tango show here, although not as flashy as those at the *tanguerías* listed above.

Pubs & Cafés with Live Music

Make these a must when planning your evenings.

On a smaller scale than nightclubs, these nightspots often feature live music, sometimes even a small orchestra, which add atmosphere and a special touch to a simple night out.

CAFÉ TORTONI
Avenida de Mayo 825
☎ *4915-7780*

Reserve ahead if there is live entertainment.

One of Buenos Aires' most traditional cafés, the huge Tortoni was founded in 1858 and is still going strong. There is live entertainment several nights a week featuring talented artists and musicians. Jazz is usually featured in the bodega while in the main salon entertainment may be anything from stand-up comedy to a

poetry or dramatic reading to tango. There is often a cover charge.

BÁRBARO
Tres Sargentos 415.
☎ *4311-6856*

This loud, brassy and wildly painted bi-level pub is a favorite among journalists and artists. There is always a lively crowd at the bar, drinking and eating peanuts, dropping the shells on the floor. Especially popular with regular patrons are the cold cut and cheese platters, along with a draught beer. Follow their example and you won't go wrong. Live jazz and blues is featured on Thursday through Saturday evenings.

Look for the red door with brass knockers.

★ Did You Know?

Bárbaro is slang for fantastic or really terrific.

THE KILKENNY
Marcelo T. Alvear, corner of Reconquista
☎ *4312-7291*

As unlikely as this may seem, The Kilkenny is an "authentic" Irish pub right in the heart of Buenos Aires. A fun place to drop into for a definite change of pace.

Guinness sponsored the grand opening in October '98.

✻ Tip

If Irish pubs are to your liking, also try **The Shamrock** at Rodriguez Peña 1120. The green shamrock above the entrance makes it hard to miss.

Reconquista is a dark street just one block from the River Plate.

EL VERDE
Reconquista 878
☎ *4315-3693*

If you want to mingle with the locals, El Verde is a great place for you. It's always crowded, upstairs and down, with singles and couples alike. Boar heads dominate the decor of this friendly pub. The music kicks off at 11:30 pm.

SATCHMO
Agüero 2279

This is one of Buenos Aires' busiest jazz clubs – the drinks are long and potent, the crowd sharp and urban, and the musical fare ranges from one-man shows to bands and jazz improv. The atmosphere is casual and friendly.

SHAMS
Federico Lacroze 2121, Belgrano
☎ *4773-0721*

The country's best pop and rock performers are often found at Shams. The lovely area attracts equally lovely people, so look chic when you head for this one. Weekends are rambunctious and crowded at this large pub.

HENRY J. BEAN'S
Junin 1749, Recoleta
☎ *4801-8477*

A North American-style "saloon," Henry J. Bean's is standing room only at happy hour. Not surprisingly, it attracts the young yuppie crowd and the noise level is high. Posters, old license plates and photos are the colorful decor. Light foods, lots of fun.

HARD ROCK CAFÉ
Av. Pueyrredón 2501, 2nd Floor
(The Design Center)
☎ *4807-ROCK (7625)*

This Hard Rock has everything in common with its counterparts around the world. It's big, loud and loaded with rock and roll memorabilia. No surprises here except there may be some Latin Rock in the mix. Happy our is Monday through Friday from 5 to 9 pm. Local bands are featured Friday and Saturday nights, starting at 1 am.

THE BAUEN HOTEL PIANO BAR
Callao 360

The Bauen provides the perfect atmosphere for a quiet *tête-à-tête*. The mood is romantic and semi-formal, and the music is always soothing. This could be just what you need after a day of sightseeing or a few hours at one of Buenos Aires high-powered nightspots.

DONEY COFFE
Av. del Libertador 3096, Palermo
☎ *4802-0075*
Open 24 hours

This modern coffee house is a great place to sit and chat with friends or people watch at any hour of the day. Seating is indoors or out.

Discos

Discos are definitely alive and well in Buenos Aires. Drinking and dancing go on until 5 am and somehow the *porteños* still make it to the office in the morning.

Some discos have cover charges.

BUENOS AIRES NEWS
Arco 17 Paseo de la Infanta
Av. del Libertador 3883
☎ *778-1500*

At over 21,000 square feet with five different locales and capacity for 3,000 guests, Buenos Aires News is practically a city within a city. Though it frequently hosts extravaganzas and private parties, this is not just your garden variety events center. Spanish cuisine, a flamenco show and Latin dance music are featured nightly at **Gitana**, an Andalusian-style nightclub.

If you're planning an event, you'll need to reserve the banquet hall in advance.

If funk, soul and disco are more your thing, then reserve a spot at the bi-level **El Reino Bar** and **EL Reino Dance Club**, where your can play billiards or dance the night away.

Just want to relax over cocktails and dinner? Then **The News Café** will be more to your liking. Or you can hop from one to the next and see what best tickles your fancy.

✻ Tip

Check *The Buenos Aires Herald* for events being held here during your stay. There's no telling what could be happening. Past events included "funky diva's flower show: the art in body paint." We'll leave that up to your imagination.

DIVINO BUENOS AYRES
Cecilia Grierson 225
Dique 4, Puerto Madero
☎ *4316-8400*

Crowded.

At the ultramodern Divino, you'll be within view of the city lights while you dance under the stars. Impressive to say the least, Divino boasts two restaurants and a dance floor that doesn't stop. That combined with its riverfront location at Puerto Madero have made it one of the hottest clubs in the city. For a real night on the town, make reservations for dinner at one of our recommended restaurants in Puerto Madero and then head over to Divino for dancing afterwards.

NEWPORT
Junín 1715/19, Recoleta
☎ *4803-3332*

A hip young crowd gathers here most evenings. Nautical flags hang behind the busy bar. Live music is often featured and you'll find MTV-style videos playing on monitors throughout. There are even a few on the ceiling.

SHAMPOO
Quintana 362, Recoleta
☎ *4813-4427*
Open: 10 pm-5:30 am
http://buenosairesnight.com/shampoo

Though the doors open at 11 pm, things really don't get started at this elegant nightspot until around midnight when the beautiful people start pouring in. Mirrors and plants complement the large video dance floor and the

Lots of "chicas" here. Guys, don't be naïve – you may get more than you bargained for.

couchettes and tables scattered throughout. There are international shows nearly every night. Prices are steep, making it pretty easy to meet the $30 minimum.

TRUMPS
Bulnes 2772, Palermo
☎ *4801-6987*
Open: Midnight-6 am every day.

Ivana, Gabriela Sabatini, Jack Palance and Maradona have signed the guest register at this exclusive nightspot in Palermo Chico. It is as informal as only the very rich can afford to be. Understatement is key to the decor, with its small black lacquer tables topped by dim lamps.

AFRIKA
Hotel Alvear Palace, Avenida Alvear 1885
☎ *4804-4031*

Afrika ranks among the city's most popular nightspots. On the formal side, guests tend to be in their 30s and up. You'll find plenty of intimate nooks to relax in while listening to the live music or you can join the crowd on the dance floor. It is best to arrive after midnight. The $25 cover includes the price of a drink.

LA TRASTIENDA
Balcarce 460
☎ *4345-0411*

Trastienda generally refers to the backroom of a shop.

If you definitely go to a disco for dancing and you like Latin music, La Trastienda is a terrific choice. Tango is featured on Thursday nights

and salsa on Wedsnesdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

HIPPOPOTAMUS
Junín 1787, Recoleta
☎ *802-0500*

This is a "traditional" disco in Recoleta – a huge dance floor, strobe lights, pounding recorded music and mirrors, both on the ceiling and underfoot. This smartly designed, somewhat formal club has several levels and thus never feels as crowded as it inevitably is. Dancing continues until the crack of dawn. There is a popular restaurant here as well.

TEQUILA
Costanera Norte y La Pampa
☎ *788-0438*

More a bar than a disco, Tequila is still a great place to go when the sun goes down. It does sport a small dance floor and a few video monitors. Because it is small, it is fairly easy to mingle here.

A Gay Club

CONTRAMANO
Rodríguez Peña 1082 (near Callao)

Contramano is Buenos Aires' hottest gay club and one of the few in town. You'll recognize it by the canopy outside. It opens at midnight and from then on the dance floor is always packed and so is the bar.

✻ Tip

If the crowd is too much to handle, try **Bunker**, also near Callao and the movie district, at the corner of Anchorena and Paraguay.

The Cantinas of La Boca

Cantinas are traditional, informal places where the waiters love to sing and the owner does his best to get the newcomers involved.

★ Did You Know?

"Cantina" once referred to a sailors' mess hall, which explains the rowdy, carefree atmosphere you'll enjoy in La Boca's modern day *cantinas*.

Some are simple Italian cafés while others are more like informal nightclubs.

A Star Is Born

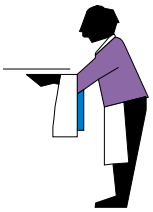
A note to the uninitiated: if the owner thrusts a microphone at you be prepared to sing a song from your national repertoire. "New York, New York" and "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" are two well-recognized North American favorites.

Necochea, formerly called "Camino Viejo" (Old Road) jumps until the wee hours on weekends. The following is a brief listing of cafés and *cantinas* in La Boca.

Curtains are painted on the glass windowpanes and the tables are lined up cafeteria-style in **Los Tres Amigos.** Kids run among the aisles and through the tables as if it were a playground and the paper mâché decor is appropriately tacky and fun. Pizza and vermicelli are heaped high on the plate here and you'll be considered a wet noodle if you don't accept the invitation to dance a tarentella or improvise a ditty in front of the boisterous crowd.

Just as boisterous are **Il Piccolo Vapore, La Fragata, Gennarino** at Necochea 1210, **La Gaviota** at 1254, **Rimini** at 1234 and **Spadavecchia** at Necochea 1180, although tour bus crowds can become a bit of a nuisance here. **Café Tango Los Buenos Muchachos** on the corner of Pedro de Mendoza and Coronel Salvadores is also worth a look.

The Carritos of Costanera Norte



Costanera Norte is a waterfront promenade that runs along the River Plate. One inlet of the promenade, Avenida Rafael Obligado, about 10 minutes from downtown by cab, is lined with popular restaurants serving Italian and grilled beef specialties. These eateries stay open until the wee hours and it is easy to move from one restaurant to another. Spending an evening here is a lot of fun. For more specifics about *carrito* dining, turn to the *Best Places to Eat* section, page 123.

LA PLAZA
Avenida Corrientes, 1400 Block

Like a chameleon, La Plaza is constantly changing. Much depends on the weather, but also on what's playing. Open for only a short time, this cobblestone alley that links Calles Montevideo and Paraná is designed on multiple levels reached by steps and ramps. There are several theaters and their shows change, but one usually has dramas and the other music. The center of La Plaza is an open-air amphitheater where concerts are held. Seating is on concrete benches and there are many inexpensive restaurants and gift shops. For the price of a beer or "pancho," you can enjoy a jazz combo or a juggler. It's a landmark in the making.

Open all day and into the early morning hours.

For Quieter Types . . .

CLASICO Y MODERNO LIBROS
Avenida Callao 892

A wonderful bookstore/café, this is a quiet hideaway for those who enjoy steaming capuccino or herbal teas while engrossed in a thriller or Garcia Marquez classic. The bookstore in the rear has some pricey English titles and opens at 10 am. The café, which is Bohemian in decor, is open seven days a week, 24 hours a day. There is music around 11 pm on Friday and Saturday nights. Book signings and readings are held in Spanish.

Cabarets

The following clubs fall into the special category of cabarets – offering typically elaborate shows with a Vegas-like format. Some include regional entertainment like the tango, but most are international in flavor. Expect to pay a cover charge at the door.

KARIM
Carlos Pellegrini 1143
Show times: 11:30 pm & 2:30 am

Karim is still going strong after decades of strip-tease shows and variety entertainment. As one would expect, the crowd here is not wet behind the ears.

30-plus seems to be the average age.

The young ladies will also dance with patrons following the shows. It is all rather above board and patrons do not seem to mind paying a lot for a drink.

KARINA
Avenida Corrientes 636
Open: 10 pm on, with two shows nightly.

Music and strip-tease always play a major role in the shows at Karina. Single men congregate here because of the attractive female performers who are available for dancing. Couples are welcome.

Single women do not enter this or any similar club unless they are "in the business."

For Men Only

Men on the prowl looking for someone to share a drink or evening with should step into one of these fairly upscale pubs on Calle Reconquista.

Success is 100% guaranteed provided you have some money in your pocket. **Cutty Sark** is the most exclusive of the locales. **Captain Morgan**, a few doors down, is just a step below. **Black**, a piano bar with a large dance floor at Ayacucho 1981 (second floor) across from the Alvear Palace Hotel, is another fine place to meet a beautiful *porteña*. It's even nice enough to come to with a date. Head up one flight of stairs. **Bridge Fashion-Bar** at Reconquista 885 is comparable.

Shop Till You Drop in Buenos Aires

Buenos Aires is a delightful place to shop. Whether you are an indefatigable shopper or a casual one, you'll be pleased by the diversity both in goods and in ambience. A shopping foray here can mean a visit to an elegant fur salon where a nutria jacket will be made to order, or to a chic boutique for buttery soft leathers fashioned into stunning coats, handbags, belts and luggage. Twenty-four karat gold jewelry set with South America's colorful gemstones, patterned knits and funky antiques are also great buys.

✻ Tip

Argentina's handicrafts make lovely and often inexpensive gifts for friends back home.

You never know where you'll find the perfect item – at a boutique on a pedestrian-only street, in a *galería* (mini-arcade), a lovely shopping center or noisy outdoor flea market.

Prices will depend on the strength of the Argentine peso against the dollar, but are often lower than in New York or Paris for items of similar

quality. Most shops accept US currency on a par with the Argentine peso.

If you are just looking for some small gifts or an unusual accessory for your home, you will enjoy the shops selling Argentine handicrafts. Bargain hunters will enjoy the challenge of haggling in Once or one of the lively flea markets in all parts of the city.

Best Shopping Areas

Calle Florida - A shop-lined pedestrian promenade that runs for 11 blocks from Avenida Rivadavia to the Plaza San Martín.

✻ Tip

The better boutiques are on the higher numbered blocks near the plaza.

Florida has many *galerías,* which are bi-level arcades built into office buildings. Shops here sell all kinds of items from leathers to knitwear. **Galerías Pacífico**, the city's poshest shopping center, and **Harrod's**, the city's only department store, are also on Calle Florida. Some of the upscale boutiques that were formerly on Calle Florida have moved into Galerías Pacífico and other shopping centers.

Avenida Santa Fe - A long street with stately buildings, Avenida Santa Fe is best known for its designer clothing shops for both men and women, and for its art galleries. Santa Fe which branches from Plaza San Martín has a small

cluster of shops there but the finer stores and scores of *galerías* are near Avenida Callao.

Recoleta - Twenty-four-carat gold jewelry with fabulous colored stones, European designer imports for men and women and lots of gift items are sold in the boutiques and arcades on Avenidas Alvear and Quintana. There are many art galleries in the area as well, particularly along Calle Arroyo. One of the few downtown streets that winds, Arroyo is a J-shaped street that connects Calle Esmeralda with Avenida Alvear.

San Telmo - If you know what to look for, the quality and broad variety of the antiques in San Telmo can be impressive. Many shops are located on Calle Defensa both north and south of the Plaza Dorrego, and there are *galerías* specializing in antiques on Defensa as well. The Sunday **Flea Market** (9 am-5 pm) has over 100 stalls and specialties include antique jewelry, rare books and ancient typewriters.

Shopping Centers

Several upscale shopping malls have opened in Buenos Aires in recent years. First on the scene was the **Patio Bullrich** at Avenida Libertador 750. When it opened its doors in 1867, the Patio Bullrich was a gathering place for wealthy livestock breeders and cattle were sold at auctions here. Later, the auction trade switched to antiques, fine furniture and works of art. Recently converted to a modern shopping center, its three levels are subdued and elegant.

With all the storefronts identical and with a glass-covered roof allowing natural light to filter in, the effect is one of relaxed comfort. There are restaurants, coffee bars and cinemas. Shops open at 10 am and stay open to 9 or 10 pm daily. Restaurants and cinemas stay open late.

It was voted the Best Shopping Center of 1992 by an international shopping center organization.

The city's most lavish shopping center, **Galerías Pacífico**, is at the corner of Calles Florida and Córdoba downtown.

The building's history dates back to the 1890s when a group of French businessmen tried to open a branch of the French department store *Bon Marché* in Buenos Aires. An economic crisis thwarted their plans and construction was halted with only one wing of the store complete. That wing would operate as a center for the arts under various guises, including a stint as the original site of Buenos Aires Fine Arts Museum, until it was acquired by the Railway of the Pacific. The railway renamed the building *Edificio del Pacífico* and installed its administrative offices there.

In 1945 the railway decided to install a shopping arcade on the ground floor. To attract merchants and shoppers, the building was renovated, a result of which was its signature cupola.

★ Did You Know?

Argentine artists Berni, Castagnino, Spilimbergo and Urruchia were commissioned to paint the murals, which are still admired by shoppers today.

Not successful, the building stood abandoned from 1961 to 1989, although the stores continued to operate on Calle Florida. It was slated for demolition in 1989, but was rescued by a group of investors who restored the landmark building and opened the center in 1992. Today its three levels house fine leather shops, apparel for both men and women, handicraft stores and small eateries. Each store has a unique storefront, which makes each level distinctive.

The ultra-modern **Alto Palermo** shopping center on the corner of Coronel Díaz and Beruti is home to 180 shops spread out over three levels and in two connected buildings. Alto Palermo most resembles a US shopping mall: a mix of upscale shops such as **Calvin Klein**, **Yves St. Laurent** and **Cacharel**, local clones of The Gap and Banana Republic, and others which sell stereo equipment. It has an interesting design with an atrium and glass elevators. The $45 million (US) Alto Palermo opened in 1990.

*** Tip**

Shop here on weekdays if you want the same personal service you'll receive Patio Bullrich and Galerías Pacífico. It's crowded on weekends.

To get there take the "D" line on the *Subte* to Palermo's Bulnes Station. Shops are open 10 am to 10 pm daily, while restaurants and cinemas are open much later.

Unicentro, the city's largest shopping center (it could easily enclose the former three), is located in the suburb of Martínez. It is not distinctive enough to merit a specific visit, but Martínez is on the way to Tigre.

Once

This is the Orchard Street of Buenos Aires. If you venture along Corrientes past the 2,000 block you'll start noticing little shops with slightly shabby exteriors and dimly lit interiors. Most of the city's wholesalers are here. Always check quality before purchasing anything and never accept the price as marked. Bargaining is expected and it's half the fun of shopping here. To find what you're looking for, don't hesitate to ask questions of the salespeople and other shoppers. They will direct you to the best bargains, often in factories where terrific prices more than make up for a lack of beautiful displays.

There are so many diverse shops in Once that naming just a few would be a terrible injustice. Most are concentrated within the boundaries of Corrientes above the 2,000 block and between Calles Pasteur and Azucenaga. Be sure to try the ethnic finger foods such as the spicy knishes (there is a sizeable orthodox Jewish population and a smaller Hasidic one) and the hot, crusty pretzels sold in the small coffee shops along the street.

Take the "D" line on the *Subte* to the Pasteur Station and you'll be in the heart of Once. Several buses travel through here as well.

Hotel Shopping Arcades

Many of the city's finest shops, designer clothing stores and boutiques have branches in the shopping arcades of the five-star hotels. Prices are on a par with shops in the centers and on the shopping streets.

With the exception of the airport shop, the internationally known H. Stern Jewelers shops are located exclusively in the hotels.

Shopping Tips

Bargaining

While bargaining is acceptable and even expected in Once and in the flea markets, shoppers do not bargain elsewhere. You can request a *descuento* (discount) if you buy many items or pay in US dollars in the smaller family-run establishments.

Credit Cards

Credit cards are accepted virtually everywhere in Buenos Aires and in the larger cities and resorts of Argentina. American Express, Visa, MasterCard and Diners Club are the most widely known.

Hours

Shops in Buenos Aires are open by 10 am and tend to stay open into the evening – normally 7 pm, but often till 9 or 10 pm. Smaller shops

close for siesta (lunch break) at 1 pm, reopening at 4 pm. Shops in the shopping centers and larger stores do not close. Most shops are closed on Saturday afternoons and all day Sunday but, once again, the shopping centers remain open.

Tax

An 18% value added tax, known as the IVA, will be imposed on most of your purchases. Tourists and visitors are entitled to a refund of any taxes they've paid on purchases valued at over $200. At the time of purchase, request an authorized receipt and the required documentation in triplicate. There is a booth in the airport where you may then collect the refund by presenting this documentation.

✻ Tip

Keep your receipts together in an envelope which you can have readily at hand at the time of your flight home.

Caveat

The rest of this section will discuss the outstanding buys in Buenos Aires, followed by a listing of those shops we feel offer great selections, have excellent reputations and are well respected by *porteños*. In many cases shops have been suggested by *porteño* friends as places they themselves shop. Listing shops can be risky business in a city as dynamic as Bue-

nos Aires. Should you arrive at one of our suggestions and find an empty lot instead, we apologize in advance. In many cases, the shop will have relocated nearby or to one of the shopping centers. Please write us in care of the publisher and let us know of any changes.

Best Buys

Leathers

This is cattle country. Designer coats and jackets, exquisite handbags, stylish shoes and durable luggage are fashioned in cowhide, suede pigskin, exotic alligator and lizard, even ostrich. They are buttery soft and you can choose from a variety of colors. Styles and prices vary from shop to shop.

FRENKEL'S LEATHER WORLD
Florida 1055 and 1075
E-mail frenkel@satlink.com

A Calle Florida favorite, Frenkel's has a particularly good selection of fashionable coats and jackets for both men and women. They also sell handbags of porcupine and lizard. Its location, between the Plaza and Sheraton Hotels, makes this large attractive shop and its sister handicraft store around the corner popular stops for visitors to the city. Service is helpful and friendly.

Frenkel's Gift Center, around the corner at San Martín, has a wonderful selection of local handicrafts and jewelry made with rhodocrosite.

CASA LÓPEZ
Plaza San Martín
M.T. de Alvear 640 & 658

Casa López is one of the largest purveyors of leather accessories in the city. Quality is high and styling is both contemporary and classic. You'll find a tasteful selection of fine clothing, handbags, belts and other accessories in leather and suede. Sales people are professional, friendly and speak English.

WELCOME
Marcelo T. de Alvear 500, corner of San Martín

Since 1930, Welcome has specialized exclusively in highly styled handbags in both calfskin and suedes. It's slightly off the beaten track, but worth the extra steps to get here. Welcome offers a large selection at moderate prices.

MICHELS
Calle Florida 537

Michels features small leather items such as snakeskin billfolds, lizard belts and ostrich leather bags. Friendly staff.

Willy Keni, Mayorano and Linterna shoes are all across the street from the Alvear Palace Hotel.

WILLY KENI
Avenida Alvear 1812

Willy Keni is the place to shop for high-fashion leather items for guys and gals. Although prices are on the high side, the one-of-a-kind items you'll find here are worth the extra bucks. Highly recommended.

PETER KENT
Paraguay 654 between Florida and Maipú
Arenales 1210
Avenida Alvear 1820

Willy Keni has a rival in this shop featuring top one-of-a-kind designs in leather for guys and gals. The service is first-class, and they will alter any item you purchase at no extra charge. Quality and prices are tops.

Stop in at Mayorano next door.

NAMIR CUEROS
Calle Florida 936 (Galería)

Namir will make a leather jacket or coat to order in 24 hours. You can select from a variety of leathers and colors.

Other fine leather shops are:

Pullman in the Galerías Pacífico; **Santa Marinella** in the Alvear Palace Arcade; **Kueros King**, Calle Florida 971; and the upscale **Mayorano** at Avenida Alvear 1824, across from the Alvear Palace in Recoleta.

Leather Shoes & Boots

Argentineans love wearing boots. Perhaps it's a tradition that goes back to their *gaucho* forefathers. Just as practical on city streets as they are on the *pampas*, boots are among the most fashionable buys you can find. Shoes and boots follow trendy European styles, particularly Italian ones.

Our Favorite Shoe & Leather Shops

* **Boniface,** Calle Florida 598 and Parera 145. Great shoes for men and women;
* **Botticelli,** Calle Paraguay 693, Avenida Quintana 488 and Santa Fe 1756.
* **Emilio Bianco**, Calle Florida 660, 755 and 898, and the Alto Palermo Shopping Center. Custom-made shoes for men and women are featured here.
* **Hedres**, Avenida Santa Fe 778 (near Plaza San Martín), represents Christian Dior in Buenos Aires and has highly styled boots and shoes.

Fur Salons

Furs are both stunning and excellent buys in Buenos Aires. If you shop in the Austral summer you may even find a great bargain.

Furry Choices

Native to Argentina is the **nutria**, a glossy expensive-looking fur which belongs to the otter family and compares favorably with mink. The nutria's long outer hairs, though waterproof, are bristly to the touch and not as elegant or as soft as the shorter hairs. There are two varieties of **Argentine fox**: the rust-colored fox from Tierra del Fuego and the gray Patagonian fox. Not to be overlooked, **minks** are also raised for fur.

Items can be made to order and shipped to your home.

FRANCOIS SABER PIELES
Calle Florida 963

Francois Saber enjoys an international reputation for his stunning fur garments. Francois also designs lovely leather jackets and belts. In addition, Saber is the Fendi representative in Buenos Aires and features their leather goods as well as suede and wool sweaters.

CHARLES CALFUN
Calle Florida 918

Another long-established shop with items that are similar to those at Francois Saber Pieles. Calfun is great for browsing, but be prepared to splurge. The suede coats and the silk raincoats lined with fur are hard to resist. Calfun also sells leather items.

R.G. FURS
Avenida Santa Fe 776

Highly styled fur coats and jackets.

DENNIS FURS
Calle Florida 925

This furrier has earned a spotless reputation. Shop carefully and you should be able to get a terrific buy on fox and/or nutria.

Dennis Furs is the exclusive representative for Yves St. Laurent Furs.

Jewelry

Brazil and Colombia provide the brilliantly colorful gems and emeralds, but the distinctive designs and flawless workmanship are sup-

plied by European immigrants from Belgium and other parts of Europe. If you're not looking for the real thing, the wholesale district of Once is home to several *bijouterías*, shops which sell faux jewelry. Most of the costume jewelry sold there is imported from Europe, but some is made locally.

H. STERN JEWELERS

Caesar Park, Plaza, Sheraton, Hyatt and Alvear Palace Hotels and at the Ezeiza Airport.

While the name is international, world renowned jeweler Hans Stern has remained faithful to his philosophy that each of his shops feature jewelry designed by local artists in order that it reflect its country of origin. Hence, in the Buenos Aires shops you'll find a lovely selection of jewelry featuring rhodochrosite. This delicate rose-colored stone is from the northwest province of Catamarca and is mined and sold only in Argentina. Its export is prohibited by law.

Also featured are colorful Brazilian gemstones such as aquamarines, tourmalines and topaz. These stones, found in a variety of colors, are set in unique pieces of jewelry in contemporary and classic styles. Equally lovely pieces use the deep blue lapis lazuli, a semi-precious stone mined in nearby Chile.

A shopping bonus at H. Stern is the affidavit issued to each customer stating that 35% or more of the metals or gems used at H. Stern are of Argentinean or Brazilian origin. This means you are exempt from customs duty.

COUSIÑO JOYAS
Paraguay 631, 2nd and 3rd Floors
Sheraton Hotel

For over 25 years Cousiño Jewelers has offered its clientele one of Buenos Aires finest selections of beautifully crafted jewelry, carvings and art pieces made with rhodochrosite or, as it is more commonly known, Inca Rose. In fact, one of the pieces in their collection was exhibited at Sothesbys. As the Inca Rose is the national stone of Argentina, jewelry and statuetes featuring this lovely stone make fine gifts and keepsakes of your trip.

REYNALDO MACHADO
Calle Florida 987

This shop has a fine selection of Gucci, Movado and Baume Mercier watches.

RICCIARDI
Plaza Hotel, Calle Florida 1001

This is one of Argentina's most prestigious jewelers with an impressive clientele, including the late Eva Perón. Ricciardi specializes in antique silver, which is often just as expensive as gold.

Ricciardi is the maker of the presidential baton.

These Jewelry Shops Also Merit a Visit

Antoniazzi-Chiappe, Avenida Alvear 1895, is one of the two stores in the world that offers "blue gold," along with unusual designer jewelry. At **Ile de France**, Calle Florida 860 in the Galería del Sol, you'll find a mixed bag of expensive evening jewelry and fabulous fakes.

Santarelli, Calle Florida 688 and Calle Florida 860 in the Galería del Sol, features a marvelous selection of antiques and estate jewelry.

Knitwear & Sheepskin

Grazing in grassy fields adjacent to the cattle are well-fed sheep – lots of them. Argentine wool, which is first rate, is exported to all parts of the world. Sweaters, both cashmere and lambswool, are terrific buys, as are knit dresses and suits. Sheepskin jackets have become very popular in the US.

JOTA U CUEROS
Pasaje Tres Sargentos 439

A factory, which makes sheepskin jackets to order, this is an excellent stop.

SILVIA Y MARIO
M.T. de Alvear 538

A large selection of cashmere sweaters is featured here.

LOS CUATRO ASES
Calle Florida 519

"The Four Aces" is located on the main shopping drag, so you can't miss it. You'll appreciate the bulky ski sweaters here. Some of the best buys are the Alpaca sweaters, usually knitted in loose pull-on styles, retaining their natural cream and brown tones.

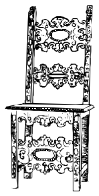
LOBSTER
Galería del Caminante, Calle Florida 838

In this veritable knitting factory, you'll find a large selection of sweaters sold both retail and wholesale.

Also Worth a Stop

Buffagni, Calle Montevideo 1183 and Calle M.T. de Alvear (Recoleta), where you'll find fine cashmere sweaters and cardigans for men and women; and **Gian Franco Serachi**, Calle Paraguay 4922, known for its one-of-a-kind wool and cashmere sweaters for all ages.

Antiques (Antiguedades) & Silver



Buenos Aires is overflowing with antiques. Throughout the city you'll find shops filled with period furniture and lovely *objets d'art.* Clocks and silver are plentiful in the antique shops and markets.

Auctions are also quite popular. If you're seriously shopping for antiques, you must arrive early since the best pieces go quickly. The city's antiques center is in San Telmo and it is centered around **Plaza Dorrego**. The Sunday Flea Market, which is open year-round, and its smaller seasonal sister which operates on Saturdays but not in the winter, are fun to poke around in, but serious antique hunters should head to the shops and galleries along Calle Defensa both north and south of the Plaza. **Pasaje de La Defensa** at Defensa 1179 is a bi-

level *galería* in a historic building. Shops are off a courtyard and feature everything from antique clothing to glassware. **Galería Ponte Vecchio** at Defensa 1135 nearby has shops that feature antique furniture and lamps. **Galería El Solar de French**, in Plaza Dorrego, has several antique shops. **Oscar's** at #33 has lovely silver items, as does **Tarquina** at #6.

Other good stops along Calle Defensa include: **El Rastro de San Telmo** at #1047; **Lo Tenía Mi Abuela** at #995; and **Viejo Bazar** at #945. **Masini** at Estados Unidos 402 (at Defensa) has antique toys.

PALLAROLS
near Plaza Dorrego in San Telmo

Now in its sixth generation of providing wealthy *porteños* with the finest silver in the world, this fascinating shop is run by Buenos Aires' most enduring silversmith. This dynasty of silversmiths began in the 18th century in Barcelona, Spain. If you're interested in taking up the craft yourself, Pallarols also holds classes in silversmithing.

GALPÓN DE CAMPO
Maipú 982

Country-style antiques such as hammered copper pieces, ceramics and rustic-looking furniture are featured here. It's a great place to pick up pieces for a beach or country house.

Handicrafts - Regional Gift Shops

The arts and crafts of Argentina make wonderful gifts. In *artesanía* shops throughout the city you'll find *facones*, elaborately sheathed daggers used by the *gauchos*, and *rastras,* silver-studded cummerbunds worn in regional fiestas. Alpaca ponchos ward off the cold and woodcarvings from the delta are charming and inexpensive. Typical handicrafts include tooled leather book covers, silver mate sets for making bitter yerba tea and pillboxes decorated with beautiful rhodochrosite inlays.

LA VITRINA
Marcelo T. de Alvear 566

La Vitrina is purely a labor of love for the pair of sisters who own and run this lovely shop while moonlighting as doctors. You'll be charmed by the marvellous selection of restored antiques, including farm tools and kitchen utensils, and beautifully crafted furniture. No less beautiful are the regional handicrafts including colorful ponchos, mates, *facones, boleadoras*, and other *típicos* handcrafted in silver and local woods. Sipping mate with your hosts, you'll feel as if you are no longer in the midst of the most cosmopolitan city in South America, but rather in the ample kitchen of an estancia.

At La Vitrina, you'll find "just what the doctor ordered."

KELLY'S
Paraguay 431

Did you know that you can tell which province an Argentine is from by the colors of his poncho? This is just one of the many intersting

aspects of Argentina's folklore and traditions that you are certain to learn about when you visit Kelly's. In business since 1956, Kelly's offers her customers a beautiful selection of handicrafts from all over Argentina along with a deeper appreciation for the country's rich cultural legacy.

FRENKEL'S GIFT CENTER
San Martín 1088

A huge bi-level shop with a terrific selection of handicrafts. Best buys include colorful ponchos, "antique" mirrors, ceramics and carved wooden items.

ARTESANÍAS ARGENTINAS
Avenida Córdoba 770

All purchases are accompanied by a certificate of authenticity.

This shop is run by a non-profit organization whose mission is to preserve the native arts and crafts of Argentina. Members travel throughout Argentina to buy ponchos, mates, tapestries, woodcarvings and other items directly from the craftsmen.

MARÍA CUMBÉ
Calle Paraguay 445

María Cumbé is one of the finest shops in the city if you're seeking pre-Columbian art and jewelry or typical handicrafts.

Other shops with large selections of handicrafts are: **El Altillo de Susana** at Calle M.T. de Alvear 515 (Recoleta); **Rincón Gaucho** in the Inter-Continental Hotel; and **El Rodeo** at Paraguay 655.

Argentine Fashions for Women

These boutiques sell the fashions of local designers. Some have an international following, but even the unknowns offer a few surprises of their own.

ADRIANA COSTANTINI
Avenida Alvear 1892, First Floor (Recoleta)

This designer has an eye for texture and color in a line of distinctive casual wear and unique evening wear that has earned her a staunch following since her initial appearance on the avenue.

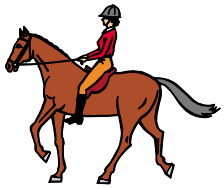
BEATRIZ JORDAN
Avenida Rodriguez Saenz Peña 1047

This is another place for classy designer wear. You can dress yourself from tip to toe with Jordan's ample selection of belts, hats, stockings and other accessories.

ELSA SERRANO
Calle M.T. de Alvear 1602, Patio Bullrich Shopping Center

Elsa Serrano is another of the city's most talented designers.

Equestrian Shops



Even non-riders will enjoy visiting these shops specializing in apparel and gear for the horse and rider. In addition to riding boots, habits and saddles, most sell hand-tooled leather goods and custom-made boots and gloves.

ROSSI Y CARUSO
Avenida Santa Fe 1601
Patio Bullrich Shopping Center

This is a blue blood establishment in the leather business. Their pedigree is such that the Royals of Spain have been shopping here for generations. Riding equipment is the specialty at "R y C," but the suitcases and accessories are the ultimate in craftsmanship and quality.

LA MARTINA
Avenida Paraguay 661

Handbags, leather accessories and fine apparel are featured, along with riding equipment and gear.

Bookstores (Librerías)

Buenos Aires bookstores are known for their enormous tables, indoors and out, piled high with books on virtually every topic ranging from European and South American Literature, to politics and politicians (especially popular here) to biorhythms and physics. Spanish predominates, but you can usually turn up some titles in French or English. Antique books are for sale throughout the city and book fairs are held all year long.

There are hundreds of bookshops of all shapes and sizes scattered throughout the city. The following are just a few of our favorites.

ABC
Avenida Córdoba 685

One of the city's largest bookshops, ABC has a wide selection of imported books, including a great many in English.

✻ Tip

Keep in mind that, since these books are imported, they will usually be on the expensive side.

EL ATENEO
Calle Florida 340

This is Buenos Aires' most complete bookshop. Most books are in Spanish and cover a wide range of topics.

A branch of **Distal Libros** is nearby at Florida 528. **Librería Turista**, on Florida not far from the corner of Paraguay, also merits a look.

KEL EDICIONES
M.T. de Alvear 1369

A wide selection of imported books is available here. Kel has several shops in town. This is the most convenient location.

KENNEY
Calle Arenales 885

Kenney specializes in children's books as well as English imports.

MILBERG
Lavalle 2223 (Once)

In this Jewish bookstore you'll find a wide range of books on the Jewish experience in South America and throughout the world of the Diaspora. Books are primarily in English, Spanish and Yiddish.

LIBRERÍA HERNÁNDEZ
Corrientes between Paraná and Uruguay

Hernández attracts a university crowd with its large selection of avant garde literature in English and Spanish.

Antiquarian Bookshops

Buenos Aires is also home to a number of stores and dealers who specialize in antique books.

ALBERTO CASARES
Suipacha 521

Alberto Casares is one of the city's most knowledgeable dealers and has a wonderful collection of antiquarian and contemporary books. The pride of the shop is its collection of the writings of Jorge Luis Borges, probably the most complete in the world. In fact, Borges was present on November 27, 1985 for the inauguration of the shop's exhibit of first editions of his work. It's only fitting that this would be the last afternoon he would spend in Buenos Aires. He left for Geneva the following day where he was to remain until his death seven months later.

For Collectors of Antiquarian Books

Librería Fernández Blanco*, Tucumán 712.*
Tomás Pardo*, Calle Maipú 618.*

Librería de Antaño, *Calle Sánchez Bustamente 1876.*
El Ventanal*, Avenida de Mayo 769.*
Librería Romano*, Lavalle 2008.*

Bonbons

If packed carefully, candy travels well and is a great gift. *Alfajores*, those irresistible pastries filled with *dulce de leche* and then dipped in chocolate or sugar, are among the most typical sweets. You'll have no problem finding a *bonbonería* in Buenos Aires.

MINOTTI
Calle Florida 162,
Avenida Santa Fe 1794

Minotti specializes in Havanas, the chocolate-covered *alfajores* from Mar del Plata.

CORCEGA
Calle Florida at Lavalle

This *bonbonería* will prepare special boxes which are ideal as gifts if you are invited to someone's home while in Argentina or for friends back home. They sell Barrancas, a brand of *alfajores* which come attractively wrapped in silver foil.

LOS DOS CHINOS
Avenida Santa Fe 3301
Libertador 3505
Brasil 764

A chain with branches throughout the city. Most *bonbonerías* like this city favorite sell local gourmet treats such as Gioconda jams and

jellies, and Fenoglio, Suchard, Georgalos and Rama chocolates and confections.

Coffee

Argentina rivals Brazil and Colombia as a major grower of the mighty coffee bean. Argentina's coffee is wonderfully rich and a bag of beans makes a terrific gift. You can purchase fresh coffee at **Cafétal**, a retailer located throughout the city specializing in coffee and assorted coffee gadgets, or at **The Pier Café** in Puerto Madero.

Wines & Liquors

Argentinean wines and liquors are excellent and have received several well-deserved awards. **Legui**, a cordial named in honor of one of Argentina's best jockeys, makes a terrific gift. Spirits such as **Los Criadores**, the Breeder's Choice Whiskey, and several local rums and beers are as popular as, and less expensive than, imports. Wines from La Rioja and Mendoza are especially good.

✻ Tip

Remember that the wineries in the Cuyo region of western Argentina and in the provinces of Salta and Catamarca produce Argentina's finest wines. A great place to purchase them while in Buenos Aires is **Bodegas Trapiche** at Juan de Justo 5751.

Cigars

Cigar aficionados may want to enjoy a few Cubans while they are in Argentina.

Davidoff, the internationally known tobacconist, opened its first shop in Argentina in 1998 at Maipu 818. In addition to a wide selection of cigars from around the world, the gift shop features a lovely selection of humidors.

Music

Music may be just what you need to fight the blues should you begin to feel nostalgic upon your return home. María Sera Lima, Pimpinela, Marilena Ross and Victor Heredia are among Argentina's best known contemporary vocalists. Mercedes Sosa, Olinda Bozán, and Carlos Gardel (who is said to be "singing better every day," despite the fact that he's been dead for over 50 years!) are the immortals of traditional and tango music. Jazz stylists Chick Correa and Gato Barbieri are local boys who have hit the big time internationally.

Most music shops in Buenos Aires are huge and are busy from morning to night. They are concentrated in the Florida and Lavalle areas.

TANGO'S
Florida 334

Just as you would expect, the tango, past and present, is well-represented throughout the vast selection of books, CD's, videos and other assorted items offered here.

SUPERMERCADO DEL DISCO
Carlos Pellegrini 481

This enormous shop features every type of music, including the Andean sounds of Atahualpa Yupanqui.

BROADWAY MICROFONO
Calle Florida 463

This is a great place to familiarize yourself with popular Argentine culturet. It caters to the under-35 crowd with a vast selection of recordings, wall-size posters and large t-shirts featuring local and foreign pop artists.

Buenos Aires A-Z

AIRLINE OFFICES: Aerolíneas Argentinas is at Bouchard 547 (☎ 4317-3000, 4340-7800 or 4480-5000 Ezeiza Airport). The **American Airlines** office is at Avenida Santa Fe 881 (☎ 4318-1111) and **United** is at Avenida E. Madero 900 (☎ 4316-0777). **Varig**, the Brazilian carrier, has an office at Carabelas 344 (☎ 4329-9200). The **LanChile** office is at Calle Florida 954 (☎ 4316-2200).

In addition to Aerolíneas, there are several smaller domestic carriers**.** These include **Austral** on Avenida Alem 1134 (☎ 4317-3600) and **LADE,** which flies to and within Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego, Calle Peru 710 (☎ 4361-7071). **LAPA** is at Carlos Pellegrini 1075 (☎ 4819-5272) and **Dinar** is a few blocks away at Carlos Pellegrini 675 (☎ 4327-1111). Domestic flights may depart from the Aeroparque "Jorge Newbury."

Be sure to ascertain which airport your domestic flight is departing from before heading out.

ELECTRICITY: The current operates on 220 volts, 50 cycles.

ENGLISH-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER: ***The Buenos Aires Herald*** covers both international events and Argentine news. The Friday paper has a weekend section.

FOREIGN CONSULATES IN BUENOS AIRES: The **United States Consulate** is at Colombia 4300 (☎ 4777-4533). The **Canadian**

Consulate is at Suipacha 1111 (☎ 4805-3032) and the **Embassy of the United Kingdom** is at Dr. Luis Agote 2412 (☎ 4803-7070).

NATIONAL HOLIDAYS: Holidays unique to Argentina include:

May 1	*Labor Day*
May 25	*May Revolution (1810)*
June 1	*Malvinas War*
June 2	*Flag Day*
July 9	*Independence Day*
August 17	*Death of San Martín*

NATIONAL PARK OFFICE: This is on Avenida Santa Fe, just a few steps away from the Plaza San Martín (☎ 311-8865).

DR. SCHOLL: After all the walking you are certain to do in Buenos Aires, a visit to the good doctor will probably be in order. Indulge and get yourself a complete pedicure. A Dr. Scholl is located on Esmeralda near Sarmiento.

Consider treating yourself to a cab ride for this one!

TELEPHONE DIAL CODE: 11 (see page 14).

TOURIST OFFICES (**NATIONAL)**: Argentine tourist offices are in major cities across the United States, including New York at 12 West 56th Street (☎ 212/603-0443); Miami at 2655 Le Jeune Road (☎ 305/442-13660; and Los Angeles, 5055 Wilshire Blvd, Suite 210 (☎ 213/930-0681). Consulates are also located in Washington D.C., Chicago, Houston and San Francisco.

The main office in Buenos Aires is at Avenida Santa Fe 883, in an alcove next door to the American Airline office (☎ 4312-2232 or toll-free in Argentina 0800-555-0016). Hours are from 9 am to 5 pm daily except Sunday, and the staff is extremely helpful. The tourist office also has a website at http://turismo.gov.ar.

TOURIST OFFICE (MUNICIPAL): The Municipal Tourist Office is in the **Centro Cultural San Martín** located at Sarmiento 1551 (☎ 4372-3612; closed Sunday). Kiosks have excellent maps and lists of events. There is one at the intersection of Calle Florida and the Diangonal Norte just off Avenida de Mayo. Another is located on Avenida Santa Fe just off the Plaza San Martín.

TOURIST OFFICES (PROVINCIAL): Virtually all printed material is in Spanish. Each province has an office in Buenos Aires and many are located near the National Tourist office. Some key offices follow:

Buenos Aires	*Avenida Callao 237 (☎ 4371-7045)*
Córdoba	*Avenida Callao 332 (☎ 4372-6566)*
Chubut	*Sarmiento 1172 (☎ 4383-7458)*
Mendoza	*Avenida Callao 445 (☎ 4371-0835)*
Misiones	*Avenida Santa Fe 989 (☎ 4322-0677)*
Neuquen	*Calle Perón 687 (☎ 4326-0433)*
Rio Negro	*Calle Tucumán 1916 (☎ 4371-5599)*
Santa Cruz	*Suipacha 1120 (☎ 4325-3098)*
Tierra del Fuego	*Ave Santa Fe 919 (☎ 4322-8855)*

Around Argentina

You can spend your entire vacation in Buenos Aires and have a terrific time – most people do. But Buenos Aires is only one face of this vast country. If time permits, you should plan to see some of the country's other wondrous faces.

In the chapters that follow we will bring those faces alive for you. While the information is not as extensive as that for Buenos Aires, each chapter is a comprehensive mini-guide that offers you a "feel" for the destination and gives you the tools you need to explore it. We have selected them with an eye to a variety of experiences in different parts of the country. We have not attempted to cover every Argentine town, but rather those we feel are of most interest.

To whet your appetite and to allow you to plan a trip that suits your interests, time frame and pocketbook, we offer a capsule sketch below.

Bariloche - Argentina's world-renowned ski resort and summer playground is at the heart of the country's lake region in northern Patagonia. It is enclosed by the mountains and lakes of Nahuel Huapi National Park, the country's largest.

Cordoba - A colonial charmer, Argentina's second largest city is the centerpiece of a lovely region of rolling hills, fertile plains, rivers and lakes.

Mendoza - This city of parks and plazas was the starting point for General San Martín and his Army of the Andes in their miraculous march across the Andes into Chile and on to victory against Spain in the Battle for Independence. Today it is the capital city of Argentina's wine country.

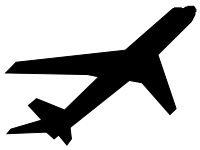
Iguazú - Iguazú is the name for the spectacular waterfalls, higher than Victoria and wider than Niagara, that stand at Argentina's northeast border with Brazil. It is also the name of the easily accessible rain forest that encircles the falls. Birds and butterflies are your companions here.

Mar del Plata - Once populated primarily by sea lions, nowadays over four million Argentines flock to this lively city, capital of Argentina's vacation coast. The arts and leisure go hand in hand here. You can fill your days with tennis, golf, hiking, horseback riding and, of course, watersports, as well as museums, art galleries and artisan fairs, followed by first-rate theater and concerts in the evenings.

Ushuaia - The capital of Argentine Tierra del Fuego, Ushuaia is arguably the world's southernmost city. Picturesque in its own right, it is the jumping-off point for trips through the Beagle Channel and to the islands nearby.

Outdoor Argentina - Active vacation suggestions for those who want to combine a trip to Buenos Aires with vigorous outdoor activities. Skiing, hiking, trekking, fishing and mountaineering are all readily available and well-organized. Here too we've included visits to Argentina's unique *estancias*, where you can watch the *gauchos* at work, enjoy a typical *asado* (roast meat) and even learn how to play polo.

Travel Within Argentina



Argentinia is a big country. Check travel times carefully before finalizing your itinerary.

Traveling between Argentina's principal cities and attractions is easy. One option is to take advantage of the **Argentina Pass** offered by **Aerolíneas Argentinas** (described on page 3). Aerolíneas has flights to all of the destinations we've covered, as well as additional cities in Argentina and throughout South America.

Land travel is also fairly straightforward. National routes (not to be confused with US Interstates) link major, and not so major, cities. You can travel virtually anywhere by bus, or rent a car. Bus travel in Argentina is via motor coach and very comfortable.

*** Tip**

Though land travel takes more time than flying, you get to see more of Argentina. If you do have some time to play with, mixing air and land travel is a great way to see the country.

With the recent privatization of the railroad, rail travel will eventually be another option. Train service is currently provided from Buenos Aires' Constitución Station to Mar del Plata and Bariloche (☎ 4304-0030) and to Rosario from the B. Mitre Station (☎ 4312-2091). However, more trains may be up and running when you visit.

Bariloche

There are other ski facilities in South America. There are even other exciting ski areas in Argentina. But, much like Aspen in the United States and St. Moritz in Europe, San Carlos de Bariloche (but always called Bariloche) is the place to be seen. From June through September it draws skiers and après skiers from all over South America and Europe. Wearing the latest ski fashions, they ski hard and party harder. Restaurants, discos, casinos, shops and streets are crowded day and night.

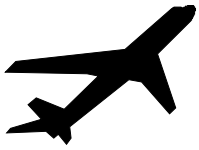
If skiing and/or the party scene is not your cup of tea, you merely have to wait for a change of season. Bariloche, unlike most ski resorts, draws even more visitors in spring and summer than it does during the winter . The warm weather crowd comes “to do,” rather than to be seen. They climb mountains, hike, fish, sail, horseback ride, sunbathe and swim.

Bariloche sits on the southern shore of Lake Nahuel Huapi in the National Park of the same name. It is the lake surrounded by soaring mountains, one snow-capped year-round, that will stay in your memory. This body of shimmering blue water extends as far as the eye can see. It is studded with fingers of land which create hidden coves and small islands. In the winter, the evergreen trees on these land strips stand out but in spring and summer, deciduous trees with shiny leaves and flowers appear. In

the fall, there is a burst of reds, yellows and oranges much like that in New England. The town itself moves inland from the lake in a grid pattern but as the streets move up the mountainside the pattern becomes haphazard.

Founded in 1895 by German-Swiss settlers, the commercial center of town, where you will spend much of your time, still retains an Alpine flavor. There are many chalet-style buildings with flower-filled window boxes, chocolate factories, typical ceramic shops and several restaurants where fondue is as popular as *parrillada*.

Bariloche, capital of the province of Río Negro, is the heart of Argentina's lake district (although geographically it is in Patagonia). It is the perfect base for exploring the lakes and national parks nearby, including those across the Andean range in Chile. For a change of pace from the man-made marvels of Buenos Aires, head to Bariloche and unwind.



Getting There

By Air: Bariloche is 1,200 air miles from Buenos Aires. **Aerolíneas Argentinas** and **Austral** have several flights from Buenos Aires daily. Flight time is two hours and 25 minutes. For the best views, request a seat on the right side of the plane. Flights depart from Buenos Aires' domestic airport, Jorge Newbury.

By Bus: Chevallier and **La Estrella** bus lines provide daily bus service to Bariloche from Buenos Aires and from other parts of Patagonia. The trip from Buenos Aires takes 22 hours.

Climate

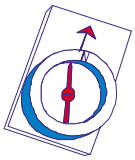
The climate is cool year-round, but Lake Nahuel Huapi moderates the temperatures. Summer temperatures average 14°C (60°F), while winter temperatures average 2°C (35°F). Snow falls from May through September and there is a lot of rain near the Andean chain. Whatever the season, bring rain gear and layerable clothing.

Arrival

The airport is 10 miles east of Bariloche. It is very small, with only a long runway, wind sock and terminal. Taxis and microbuses meet each flight. There are Hertz and Avis rental car kiosks at the airport. A cab from the airport to the center of town will cost approximately $10.

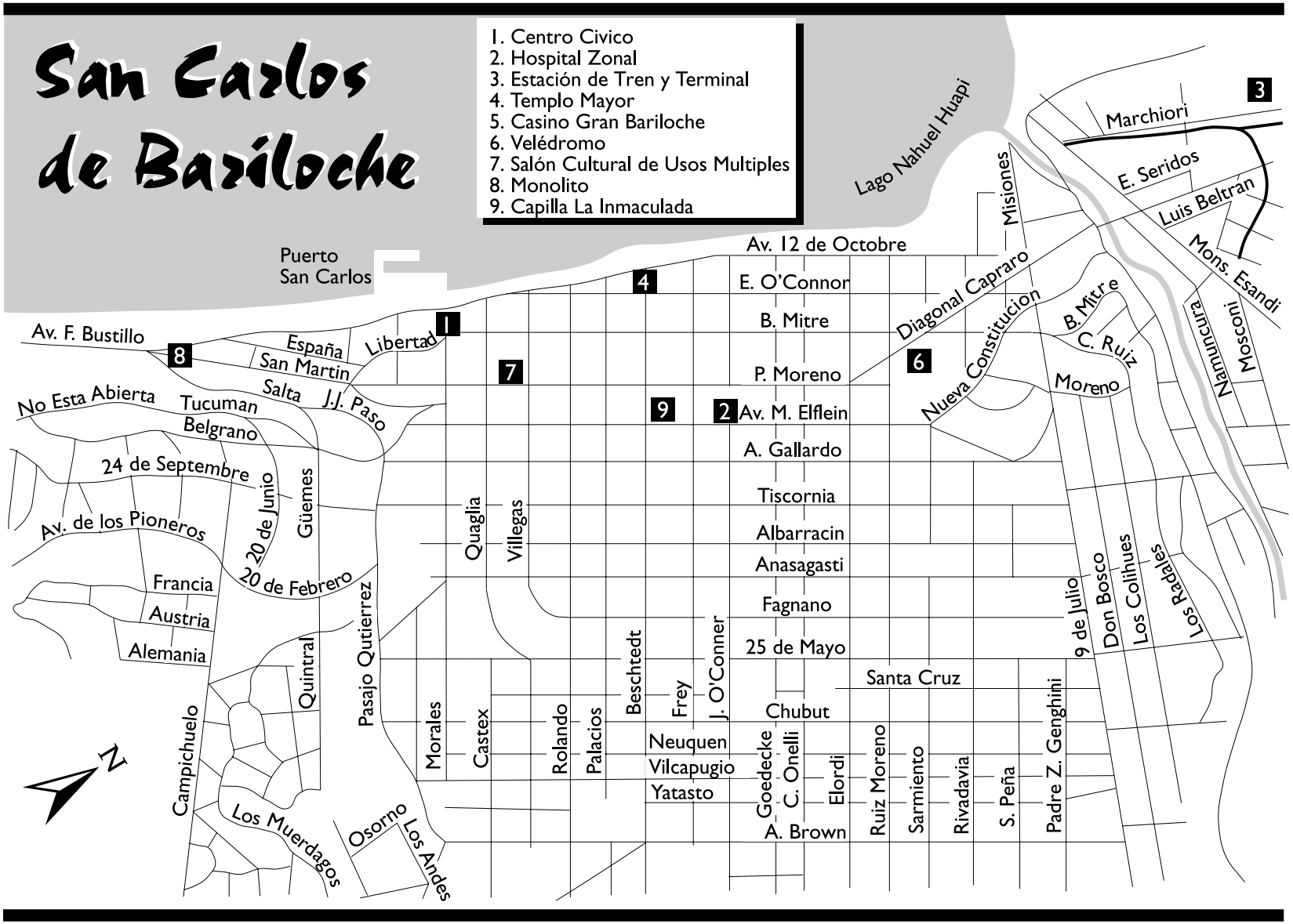
Jorge Newbury is called Aeroparque (Ay-ro-park-eh).

Orientation



Bariloche, at 2,400 feet above sea level, is the heart of Argentina's Lake Region. The area, dotted with lakes, is nestled at the foot of the Andean mountain range. It is home to 110,000 people, many of whom have moved here from other parts of Argentina and Chile. The commercial center of town is built along the southern shore of Lake Nahuel Huapi. This part of town is quite small and, although hilly, can be

Bariloche is in the province of Río Negro.


San Carlos de Bariloche
1. Centro Civico
2. Hospital Zonal
3. Estación de Tren y Terminal
4. Templo Mayor
5. Casino Gran Bariloche
6. Velédromo
7. Salón Cultural de Usos Multiples
8. Monolito
9. Capilla La Inmaculada
Lago Nahuel Huapi
Puerto San Carlos
Av. 12 de Octubre
E. O'Connor
B. Mitre
P. Moreno
Av. M. Elflein
A. Gallardo
Tiscornia
Albarracin
Anasagasti
Fagnano
25 de Mayo
Santa Cruz
Chubut
Neuquen
Vilcapugio
Yatasto
A. Brown
Av. F. Bustillo
España
Libertad
San Martin
Salta
J.J. Paso
No Esta Abierta
Tucuman
Belgrano
24 de Septembre
Av. de los Pioneros
20 de Junio
20 de Febrero
Güemes
Francia
Austria
Alemania
Quintral
Campichuelo
Los Muerdagos
Pasajo Qutierrez
Osorno
Los Andes
Quaglia
Villegas
Morales
Castex
Rolando
Palacios
Beschtedt
Frey
J. O'Conner
Goedecke
C. Onelli
Elordi
Ruiz Moreno
Sarmiento
Rivadavia
S. Peña
Padre Z. Genghini
Misiones
Diagonal Capraro
Nueva Constitucion
B. Mitre
C. Ruiz
Moreno
Marchiori
E. Seridos
Luis Beltran
Mons. Esandi
Mosconi
Nahuncura
9 de Julio
Don Bosco
Los Colihues
Los Radales
N

easily walked. The residential areas are more contemporary in style and rather haphazard due to Bariloche's rapid expansion avenues, which run east to west alongside the lake. They change names at the Civic Center.

The three main avenues are Moreno, Elflein and Mitre.

Centro Cívico

The Civic Center is lovely. Several ocher stone buildings enclose a landscaped square overlooking the lake and municipal dock. These buildings were designed by local architect Ezequiel Bustillo, who also laid out the town grid and designed the Llao-Llao resort. The buildings were completed in 1934 and the stone was quarried locally. They house the municipal government offices, the tourist office, police department, the Natural History Museum of Patagonia and a library. The equestrian statue in the square honors **General Roca**, who led the Argentine forces against the Mapuche Indians. They fiercely resisted the white settlers who were arriving in the area. A highlight is the **clock** on the municipal tower which, at the stroke of noon, opens to reveal revolving statues depicting an Indian, a missionary, a Spaniard and a farmer from the time when the area was first being colonized.

Avenida B. Mitre

This busy street starts at the arch leading east from the Centro Cívico. It is crowded with shops, airline offices, hotels and restaurants.

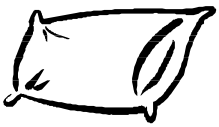
West of the Civic Center, it becomes Avenida España.

Avenida P. Moreno/San Martín

This avenue, one block south of B. Mitre, is another important street. For most of the commercial center of town it is Avenida Moreno, and continues as San Martín west of the Civic Center. Hotels, restaurants, cinemas and shops line the entire length of the avenue.

Calles Morales, Quaglia, Villegas, Rolando, Palacios & Beschtedt

These are the most important north/south streets. Here you will find hotels, restaurants, tour operators and shopping arcades.



Best Places to Stay in Bariloche

Accommodations are plentiful in Bariloche and there is tremendous variety as well. Choices include out-of-town resorts with spacious grounds and European service and in-town five-star stops with resort amenities and within easy walking distance of restaurants and nightlife. Center city also has scores of small hotels with fewer amenities and lower rates, and there are motel-like accommodations all along the road from town to Cerro Catedral ski area. The hotels at the ski center are completely booked during the ski season (July and August) and you definitely need reservations.

Alive Price Scale

Deluxe: . . $200+
Expensive: . $120+
Moderate: $60-120
Inexpensive: $35-60
Budget: under $35

Hotel rates vary with the season. High-season rates are in effect in July and August and from

mid-December through mid-March. Rates are lower during the spring and fall. All our selections have heated rooms with private baths, TVs (some with CNN, HBO & ESPN) and minibars. Many include continental breakfast in the rate. All accept major credit cards.

In-Town Hotels

PANAMERICANO BARILOCHE ☆☆☆☆☆
Avenida San Martín 536
8400 Bariloche
☎/*fax 2944-425-846*
E-mail panatel@bariloche.com.ar
306 rooms
Deluxe

Located in the casino complex.

The Panamericano lives up to its mission statement – "Always offer guests an unforgettable stay." Though the hotel's downtown location (close to shopping and dining) and the fact that all rooms offer panoramic views of the lake and mountains are enough to make any stay in Bariloche unforgettable, the Panamericano does not rest on its laurels. Rooms are spacious with sitting areas and a desk. The lobby has a roaring fireplace, which is the center of attention during the late afternoon tea and cocktail hour, and the La Rondine restaurant features delicious Italian fare. There is an indoor pool, sauna and solarium. Service is first rate.

HOTEL EDELWEISS ☆☆☆☆☆
Avenida San Martín 202
8400 Bariloche
☎ 2944-426-165; fax 2944-425-655
100 rooms
Expensive

Edelweiss is on the main street just one block from the Civic Center and an easy walk to restaurants and shops. Tasteful furnishings, including soft leather sofas and easy chairs with natural color fabrics on the floors and beds, create a relaxing environment. Guests enjoy the health club, sauna, glass-enclosed pool and in-house masseuse and hairdresser.

Ask for a room facing the lake.

HOTEL NEVADA ☆☆☆☆
Rolando 250
8400 Bariloche
☎ 2944-422-778; fax 2944-427-914
In Buenos Aires 251-4393-8456
E-mail hnevada@bariloche.com.ar
Expensive/moderate

A non-descript exterior opens into a tasteful lobby with plush couches arranged in sitting areas and lively Van Gogh prints on the walls. The interior decor is Swiss, with light woods, carved beams and lots of flowers. The breakfast area is off the lobby and continental breakfast is included in your rate. This area doubles as a tea room in the late afternoon. Rooms are small but well-maintained and extremely functional. The front desk staff is quite helpful.

HOTEL TRES REYES ☆☆☆☆
Av. 12 de Octubre 135
8400 Bariloche
☎ *2944-426-121; fax 2944-424-230*
E-mail h3reyes@bariloche.com.ar
Moderate

The Tres Reyes offers its guests the best of both worlds at a terrific price. Not only can it boast a lovely lakeside location, but it is within walking distance of downtown. Though the decor may appear a little dated, the comfort and fine service aren't.

HOTEL NAHUEL HUAPI ☆☆☆☆
F.P. Moreno 252
8400 Bariloche
☎/*fax 2944-422-056; reservations 2944-433-635*
E-mail hnahuelh@bariloche.com.ar
70 rooms
Moderate

Popular with tour groups, the Nahuel Huapi features rooms which, though not large, are comfortable. They are decorated in light woods with matching floral comforters and drapes. Continental breakfast is included in the basic rate, or you can opt for the modified American plan, which includes dinner as well. Meals are served family-style in the hotel's private dining room.

✻ Tip

Since there are plenty of good restaurants in Bariloche, we suggest you forego the American plan.

BARILOCHE SKI HOTEL ☆☆☆
Av. San Martín 352
☎ 2944-424-488; fax 2944-428-540
E-mail baski@bariloche.com.ar
50 rooms
Moderate

The Bariloche Ski Hotel offers you all the comfort you need after an intense day on the slopes without all the frilly extras. Room furnishings are basic yet comfortable and do have color TV and a mini-bar, though little else. The location is great. Downtown attractions are within walking distance.

Out of Town Hotels

Llao-Llao is a terrific choice for a honeymoon or special anniversary.

LLAO-LLAO HOTEL AND RESORT GOLF SPA ☆☆☆☆☆
Avenida Ezequiel Bustillo Km 25
☎ 2944-248-065; fax 2944-248-222
US reservations 800-223-5652
E-mail llaollao@datamarkets.com.ar
www.datamarkets.com.ar/llaollao
164 rooms/suites
Deluxe/expensive

You can look long and hard but you'll never find a hotel with a better location than Llao-Llao (jou-jou). Twenty-five kilometers from Bariloche in the heart of the national park, it sits on a raised promenade encircled by snow-capped peaks and a kaleidoscope of changing landscapes. Renovated after being closed for many years, the hotel is a world unto itself. With no neighbors, save for the

small park marina across the road, Llao-Llao looks like a Swiss monastery outside and an elegant log cabin inside. It has several buildings that are connected by covered walkways.

The 18-hole golf course is possibly the most gorgeous course in the world, and there are tennis and paddleball courts, a health club with heated pool and whirlpool. The spa offers a full range of exclusive, all-natural treatments and activities such as massages, diets and wraps designed to equilbrate, lubricate, hydrate and protect your skin while pampering your soul. All of Llao Llao's restaurants are enclosed by glass picture windows to take full advantage of the stunning views.

The golf course was inaugurated just in time for Presidents Clinton and Menem to play a round (no pun intended) during President Clinton's 1997 visit to Argentina.

✻ Tip

We consider the Llao Llao to be the most beautiful hotel in the world, not only because of its breathtaking location but because of its charming design and furnishings.

HOTEL PIRE-HUE ☆☆☆☆☆
Base of Cerro Catedral
Office in Buenos Aires:
San Martín 1127 1A
☎ 251-4312-4659; fax 251-4311-4569
E-mail pirehue@impsat1.com.ar (reservations)
20 rooms & 20 apartments
www.argentina.commerce.com/pire-hue
Expensive

The wonderfully rustic Pire-Hue takes the concept of "Ski In & Ski Out" to new heights of luxury. In the winter, you'll walk out the door to a lift waiting to wisk you to the top of the mountain, and enjoy après ski in a beautifully appointed sitting room complete with a fire crackling in the hearth or in a steamy indoor/outdoor pool looking out onto the snow-covered countryside. In summer, you'll have your pick of activities such as white waterrafting, hiking, horseback riding, boating, fishing or golf, and then indulge yourself with a bottle of champagne on the terrace or at poolside. Of course, the chef does his best to ensure that you never go hungry. Meals are always beautifully prepared, a feast for the eyes as well as the palate. Rooms are lovely and feature country-style furnishings and overstuffed comforters. Apartments vary in size to accommodate up to seven persons.

The Pire-Hue should be your first-choice if you are planning to stay at Cerro Catedral.

HOTEL TUNQUELÉN ☆☆☆☆

Av. Ezequiel Bustillo, Km 24.5
☎/fax 2944-448-600
☎ 251-4322-4247; fax 4394-9599 (Buenos Aires)
E-mail maresur@satlink.com
www.maresur.com
31 rooms
Moderate/expensive

The Tunquelén is a quaint four-season resort overlooking Lake Nahuel Huapi. The modern chalet-style, wood and stone buildings are surrounded by over 20 acres of woods and gardens set against a magnifi-

cent backdrop of the lake with snow-capped mountains in the distance. Activities range from golf, tennis, sailing, hiking, horseback riding or fly fishing during the warmer months to skiing at Cerro Catedral in winter, to even just a lounge chair at lakeside or a drink beside the lake or indoor swimming pool in any season.

There is no greater reward than exquisitely prepared regional cuisine. The menu features venison, lamb, smoked salmon and trout caught that same day by a fellow guest, accompanied by sauces made with forest berries and other native ingredients.

EL CASCO ☆☆☆☆☆
Avenida Ezequiel Bustillo, Km 11
Box 436, Bariloche
☎/*fax 2944-461-032*
25 rooms
Deluxe/expensive

Hidden from the road by trees, El Casco is a lovely hideaway on the shores of Lake Nahuel Huapi. Its owners and staff provide the attention to detail that makes it the choice of European jet-setters and wealthy Latinos every ski season. Each room is unique, with its own name, individual furnishings and color scheme. All are elegant. Fresh flowers on your night table, chocolates on your pillow each night, and a ready smile from the staff make your stay enjoyable. The public rooms are formal, with paisley high-backed chairs and low wood-beamed ceilings. Service is first-rate.

The dining room, which overlooks the lake and hotel marina, serves continental cuisine featuring local seafood.

LA CASCADA ☆☆☆☆☆
Avenida Ezequiel Bustillo, Km 6
Bariloche
☎ 2944-441-046; fax 2944-441-076
E-mail lacascada@infovia.com.ar
www.lacascada.com
25 rooms
Deluxe

A member of the Relais & Chateaux Association, La Cascada is reserved where Llao-Llao is expansive. Its intimate size allows La Cascada to pamper its guests with serenity and service. All rooms and public areas are decorated in muted tones and face the lake and perfectly manicured grounds. Guests congregate around the umbrella-shaded tables on the outdoor terrace for cocktails and afternoon tea.

The food here is always spectacular and non-guests frequently visit the attractive restaurant. Breakfast, which is included in the rate, is served in a small dining area. A cozy indoor pool and sauna, quiet reading rooms and an open terrace are on the lower level.

Best Places to Eat

You will not go hungry in Bariloche. There are scores of restaurants in town, ranging from picturesque Swiss-style eateries featuring fondue, to steakhouses serving thick steaks and sizzling *parrilladas*, to cozy *confiterías*. Many menus feature trout caught locally and prepared in a variety of ways from smoked to almondine.

Alive Price Scale
(per person)
Expensive: . . $50+
Moderate: . . $25+
Inexpensive: . . $25-

As is common throughout Argentina, dinner is served late, with the most popular hour being 9 to 10 pm in winter and even later during the summer.

*** Tip**

Restaurants are small and you'll want to reserve for dinner in season. All accept major credit cards.

LA MARMITE RESTAURANT & CONFITERIA
Avenida Mitre 329
☎ *423-685*
Regional
Moderate

A delightful choice, this stone chalet is tastefully furnished in Swiss style, complete with hanging cowbells and posters. It operates as a *confitería* from 11 am to 8 pm, serving omelettes, salads and hearty homemade soups. At 8 pm the fare becomes more substantial and fondues with beef or cheese are featured.

EL VIEJO MUNICH
B. Mitre 102
☎ *422-336*
Moderate

El Viejo Munich and La Marmite are similar choices.

This German-style *confitería* serves omelettes, sandwiches, grilled meats and sausages, and has heavy carved booths and tables with checkered cloths.

LA VIZCACHA
Rolando 279
☎ 422-109
Regional
Moderate

Watch soccer games here.

You'll have to look for this eaterie, which has windows just at ground level. While the decor is Swiss, with heavy carved tables and chairs and green tablecloths, the food is primarily grilled meats, local trout and pasta.

CASITA SUIZA
Quaglia 342
☎ 423-775
Closed for lunch on Wednesday and Thursday
Expensive

A white-washed chalet-style building with carved wooden balconies and hanging planters, this place looks right at home on hilly Quaglia Street. There are several dining areas, with mauve cloths and fresh flowers on every table. A menu in Spanish, German and English features loin of pork with sauerkraut, gulasch, Hungarian-style chicken, as well as fondues.

LA FAMILIA WEISS
Palacios 167
☎ 424-829
Moderate

As a producer and purveyor of gourmet smoked meats and cheeses for years, the Weiss Family has become a Bariloche tradition. They also have kitchens in Península San Pedro at the 20 kilometer mark on the route to Llao Llao and their market on Avenida Mitre. You'll sample

their delectable smoked meats and cheeses, including fondues enjoy a main course of *ciervo al la cazadora con spetzel (*deer prepared hunter style with spetzel*),* or *jabalí con salsa de frambuesa* (wild boar with rasberry sauce), a variety of different salmon dishes include salmon ravioli, and an equal number of trout dishes. Remember to save room for dessert. Choose something from the dessert cart or try the chocolate fondue.

The salón de parrilla, or grill room, is a new addition to the restaurant.

LA TAVOLA
Hotel Edelweiss
☎ *426-543*
Continental
Expensive

The elegant La Tavola has an extensive menu featuring fondues, local venison and fish prepared to meet the standards of even the most discerning connoisseur. The setting is lovely, with wooden beamed ceilings and old photos of Bariloche and the mountains.

CAZA MAYOR
Avenida Elflein 190 at Quaglia
☎ *423-089*
Expensive

An elegant restaurant, Casa Mayor's dark wood walls are set off by red and green tablecloths and hanging plants. Specialties include *ciervo* (venison) and *trucha* (trout), as well as grilled meats. Appetizers and desserts are served from rolling carts.

Caza Mayor is located next door to the Familia Weiss restaurant.

Europa serves a three-course lunch and is crowded with local business people.

RESTAURANT EUROPA
Palacios 149 (at Mitre)
☎ *423-133*
Moderate

Distinctive decor and good food sets Europa apart. There is one dining area and the rear wall is glassed and overlooks a lovely garden. Red lacquered chairs with black leather trim encircle tables with black and white tableclothes. The food includes pastas, grilled meats and chicken, as well as local trout with mushrooms or almonds.

RESTAURANT 1816
Avenida Elfein 167 (near Quaglia)
☎ *423-922*

This is another excellent steakhouse. It's short on decor, but the steaks are served with two dipping sauces and are superb.

Nearby, **Jauja** at Quaglia 366 (☎ 422-952) is smaller and more attractive. The meats are very good as are the pasta dishes, although service can be slow. The trout platters are considered superb by locals.

Lighter Dining

LA ALPINA
Moreno 98 (at Quaglia)
Inexpensive

Try the hot chocolate near the fireplace on a cold afternoon.

With booths and tables encircling a large wood-burning fireplace, La Alpina resembles a ski lodge. White-washed walls and low beamed ceilings add to the warmth, which you'll appre-

ciate when the wind is blowing – as it so often is. Fare here includes burgers, sandwiches, *chorizos* and pastries. Very popular.

QUORUM
B. Mitre 285
Inexpensive

A personal favorite, Quorum is many things in one – a supermarket, a gourmet take-out shop, a bakery, a butcher and fresh fish shop and a cafeteria. Select your foods at the gourmet counter (everything from soups to sliced meats and fish to prepared meat and vegetable salads, pastries and drinks); pay the cashier; and carry your tray up one flight to the dining room. Terrific.

Fine Dining Outside Town

EL PATACÓN
Av. Bustillo, Km 7
☎ 442-898
Regional
Expensive

Upscale sportsmen will fit right into the decor at El Patacón. Located on the shores of Lake Nahuel Huapi, it is decorated in the style of an elegant hunting lodge with unfinished wood and rough hewn stone throughout. Picture windows offer expansive vistas of the lake, islets and mountains across the way, while generously stocked wine racks and a fire crackling in the hearth hold the promise of a pleasant meal. In keeping with the Patagonian motif, the

The Clintons and President Menem dined here on October 17, 1997.

Patacón is a person from Patagonia.

menu features local game, fish and side dishes native to the region.

LOS CESARES
Llao Llao Hotel & Resort
Av. Ezequiel Bustillo, Km 25
☎ *448-530*
Continental/Spa
Expensive

The setting is spectacular.

Eating right has never felt as decadent as it does at the Los Cesares restaurant. The innovative spa menu foregoes complicated sauces and sautés. Instead meat, poutry, fish and fresh vegetables are grilled or steamed, and accented with sage, basil and other herbs to bring out their own flavors. You can happily enjoy a three-course meal (even dessert) totally guilt-free. Appetizers include trout terrine with gooseberry sauce, leek quiche with blue seaweed (only 90 calories) and vegetable panaché. Grilled chicken on lemon cullis with vegetable mousse and Patagonian lamb with sage, broccoli, cauliflower and tomato are among the main courses. Desserts are light and luscious. Our favorite is the poached pears with raspberry sauce.

CERVECERIA BLEST
Av. Bustillo, Km 11.6
☎ *461-026*
International
Inexpensive
Open from 12 noon

Argentina's first brew pub.

The microbrew phenomenon has made it all the way down to Patagonia. At Blest, the tavern

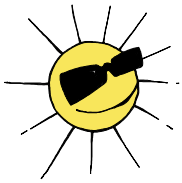
shares quarters with the brewery so you'll enjoy fresh beer straight from the vat. From the outside it reminds us of an old mining town in the west. Inside, the dining room is just as rustic. The menu features standard pub fare such as pizza, pastas and assorted finger foods.

Also on the premises is a woodshop, the **Taller Artesanal San José**, where traditional furniture and other items are made, and **Los Pioneros**, a gift shop.

You can take Bus #20 to get here.

Fast Food

Fast food stops include **Pumpernic** at Mitre 301 for burgers; **El Mundo I and II** at B. Mitre 370 and 759 for pizza; **Rock Chicken** at Quaglia 283; and a foodcourt at **Puerto San Carlos**, the municipal dock.



Dawn to Dusk

Bariloche is a year-round resort destination. It is most popular during the Argentine winter (June-September) when it is South America's most alluring ski resort, and in the Argentine summer (December-March) when visitors arrive eager to explore Nahuel Huapi National Park and Lake. Outdoor activities in summer (as well as late spring and early fall) include trekking, mountain climbing, bicycling, horseback riding, fishing and all manner of water sports. Winter activities include both Alpine and Nordic skiing, snowmobiling and dog sled rides. Sights in the area include towering

mountains, lush islands in the lake, condor hideaways and other Patagonian towns nearby.

Warm Weather Bariloche

You can easily walk through Bariloche. There are few "don't miss" sights, but one absolute must is the **Museo de la Patagonia** on the Plaza Centro Cívico. Small but informative, the museum has three floors of exhibits. The first floor shows animals that are indigenous to Patagonia, including the condor. The second floor describes the founding of Bariloche. Look closely at the early photos and you'll see some young men wearing Nazi armbands. (These photos were taken long before Hitler.) The third floor focuses on the Indian tribes that lived in the area. Tools, kayaks and clothing are among the displays. Stop in at the adjoining library.

The Tourist Office is also on the Plaza Centro Cívico.

A stroll along the waterfront heading east (right) is relaxing. You'll soon come to **Plaza Italia**, marked by a statue of Remus and Romulus and beyond it a huge cathedral. Stunning on the outside, the interior is disappointing and looks unfinished.

You can tour the town by mini-bus, but it's a lot more fun to take "Pochi," a small two-car trolley which leaves on the hour from the steps in front of the Civic Center. Tours start at 9 am and the last tour leaves at 6 pm, with a break or siesta from 1 to 2 pm.

Pochi trolley tours last 50 minutes.

Nahuel Huapi National Park & Lake

Nahuel Huapi National Park is comprised of 815,000 acres. Its northern end is in the province of Nequen, while its southern end is in Río Negro, where Bariloche is located. The jewel of the park, which is studded with lakes, is Lake Nahuel Huapi. Ninety-six kilometers long and only 12 kilometers wide (60 by 7½ miles) at its broadest point, it is irregularly shaped with long islets (*brazos)* that extend into the land.

The view of the Andes as you walk along the lake is magnificent and will remain with you for the rest of your life.

★ Did You Know?

The name means "Tiger Island" in Araucano, the language of the Mapuche Indians that lived here.

Although the activities vary, the park is used year round. In warm weather, from October through April, the park is used by trekkers.

Treks are organized by local tour operators and by the Club Andino, which maintains several *refugios* (shelters) in the park. Treks follow clearly marked trails through forested areas, crossing streams on hanging bridges, climbing to waterfalls, circling lagoons and stopping near icy-blue glaciers. Your fitness level should determine which trek you join. Club Andino groups usually have 20-40 people and treks last anywhere from 1½ hours to several days. The Club Andino office is at Calle 20 de Febrero 30, two blocks north of the Civic Center (☎ 426-700). Serious mountain climbers can arrange

The National Park Office is at San Martín 24.

climbs with experienced guides. Arrangements must be made well in advance.

You can explore the park on horseback or on a mountain bike. There are organized tours or you can rent a bike at the shop at Puchi Moreno 1035 and go it alone. Other organized park activities include fishing, hunting and watersports.

✻ Tip

The water in Lake Nahuel Huapi is very cold year-round so you'd do better to swim in one of the smaller lakes in the park. Many of them have small beach strips.

Fishing/hunting enthusiasts should contact the Club Andino de Pesca y Caza, Avenida 12 de Octubre, ☎ 944-22043.

✻ A Tip for Anglers

The fishing season starts in November so plan accordingly. Trout and salmon are among the most common catches.

Isla Victoria & Quetrihue Península

Plan on long days. In the summer time, it stays light out until 10:30 pm. The sun sets at 5 pm in the winter.

Isla Victoria (Victoria Island), a long narrow island in Lake Nahuel Huapi, is a popular stop. Reached by catamarans which leave from either the municipal dock or Puerto Pañuelo at Llao-Llao, the island is interesting for the variety of trees growing there. Brought from all over the world, they flourish here in a unique forest. The northern tip of the island has a forest of *arrayanes* (myrtle trees). These rare trees are twisted and have orange trunks with bark

that actually seems to be peeling. There are even more *arrayanes* on Quetrihue Peninsula nearby, where a small area has been designated **Los Arrayanes National Park.**

You can combine your visit to Isla Victoria with a stop at Quetrihue Peninsula.

Visiting Nearby Mountains

Several of the peaks within the park can be visited. **Cerro Tronador**, an extinct volcano, is the highest peak in this area. It has several glaciers and you can drive to one, **Ventisquero Negro** (Black Glacier). Only part of the road is paved and it is so narrow that traffic is regulated, with cars going up in the morning and down in the afternoon. Check this before setting out.

Cerro Otto is the mountain that directly overlooks Bariloche. The peak is accessible by a cable car which is stationed at the base of the mountain on Av. de los Pioneros, Km 5. The **Teleferico Cerro Otto** (☎ 441-035) runs from 10 am to 6:30 pm, with departures every half-hour. Tickets, which include the shuttle to and from the cable car station, are available at the kiosk in front of the Banco Nación.

The profits from the sale of these tickets are distributed among hospitals in Buenos Aires and Bariloche.

There is plenty to do at the top of the mountain. Guided mountain bike and hiking tours, and rock climbing lessons can be arranged during the warmer months and dog sled rides are available in the winter. There is also a revolving restaurant and an art gallery.

A ski resort in winter, **Cerro Catedral** is a kick-off point for treks in summer and an excel-

The views are sensational! Bring plenty of film.

lent scenic overlook. A cable car takes you to the restaurant allowing for beautiful views en route as well as from the peak.

Sightseeing

You can hire a remis (car and driver) to take these trips privately.

There are organized tours to Llao-Llao and the areas nearby. You can bicycle the 25 kilometers (15½ miles) or take bus #20, which leaves from stops in front of the Edelweiss Restaurant and the Panamericano Hotel. The fare is only $2 and the panoramic windows take maximum advantage of the spectacular scenery along the way. Route 237 heads west from town on its way to Llao-Llao. En route it passes scores of small hostelries, restaurants and tiny villages. You can stop at smaller lakes that have beach facilities.There are two organized driving trips. The "Short Circuit" follows Route 237 to Llao-Llao, where it stops for a while. It leaves along Route 79 which climbs to magnificent scenic overlooks, particularly the one at Bahia Lopez. The "Big Circuit," which includes the short one, continues east of Bariloche, passing many lakes and visual wonders. This 150-mile drive takes an entire day.

Buses from Bariloche connect to other parts of the lake region and Patagonia. The city does not have a central bus terminal. **Chevallier** at Moreno 107 (☎ 426-999) has a bus to **San Martín de los Andes** every day but Wednesday. This town, at the northern end of Nahuel Huapi National Park, is four hours away. **Charter Bus Company** at Moreno 126

(☎ 428-822) has two buses daily to **El Bolsón**. **El Bolsón** is a laid back town, 3½ hours away via a rough road, surrounded by fruit orchards. **KoKo** is another bus company that has routes throughout the Lake Region.

Crossing to Chile

The **Chilean Lake Region**, just over the Andean range, is the mirror image of the Argentine. Several bus companies make the crossing to Osorno and Puerto Montt, the major towns in the Chilean Lake Region. Contact **Tas Choapa** at Moreno 138 (☎ 2944-426-663 or **Cruz del Sur** at San Martín 453 (☎ 2944-424-044). To make an adventure of the crossing you can do it by boat/bus, which takes a lot longer (two days) but is relaxing and scenically stunning. The boat crosses Lake Nahuel Huapi and then you overnight in Peulla, Chile. On the second day you cross Lake Todos Los Santos and board buses for the ride to Puerto Montt. Contact **Catedral Turismo** at Mitre 399 (☎ 2944-425-443 or fax 2944-426-215.

Winter in Bariloche

Cerro Tronador ("thunderer"), an extinct volcano with a peak at 11,725 feet above sea level, is snow-capped year-round. Although no longer active, it still makes the "thunder" sound it was named for. It's actually the thunderous noise of ice sliding down the mountain from one of the glaciers on its peak. Ski "nuts" do ski on Tronador in August but it has no lifts. I leave

the rest to your imagination (and insurance carrier).

Skiing in Bariloche means **Cerro Catedral**, a mountain 13 miles from town. In operation since the 1950s, Cerro Catedral is a complete ski resort, with hotels, ski schools and rental facilities. It has a large parking lot, and Micro Omnibus 3 de Mayo leaves for the slopes from Avenida Moreno. Check at **Datos**, Missiones 115 for schedules and stops.

A cable car carries you to the restaurant at 3,300 feet. The views are terrific. There are 32 lifts of all types and they carry skiers to various parts of the ski area, which has 18 ski runs. Ranging from novice to experienced, some are quite steep while others challenge skiers with trees haphazardly dotting the run. Cross country skiing is also quite popular.

There are several hotels at the slopes. **Club Hotel Catedral** (☎ 460-006) has 76 rooms and 64 apartments for those planning a long stay. It offers several restaurants, a nightclub and a sauna. The most luxurious hotel of all, **Pire-Hue**, is described above in the Best Places to Stay section, page 279.

Local Tour Operators

Sightseeing tours and adventures like trekking and fishing are readily available in Bariloche. There are many tour operators in town. Trips are well organized. **Cumbre Patagonicas** at Villegas 222 (☎/fax 2944-423-283) offers the

widest range of adventure trips, including rafting, mountain biking, trekking and fishing. The staff speaks English well. They have a branch office at the Llao-Llao Resort. **Karnak Expediciones y Viajes**, Mitre 265, Of. 18 (☎/fax 2944-428-236) is another reputable organization that leads treks through the forest, operates rafting trips on the River Manso, and runs birdwatching expeditions, among others.

If you're most interested in spectacular scenery, then book a tour with **Turismo de La Plata** at Mitre 161 (☎ 431-024). They offer full- and half-day trips, throughout the region, including Cerro Tronador and the Los Alerces Waterfall, San Martín de los Andes, and Puerto Blest and Lago Frías at the border with Chile. You'll travel both overland and on the lakes.

Bariloche After Dark

Looking for some late night action? You have several options. The most popular diversion in town, judging by the number of participants, is the **Casino del Sur**, next to the Hotel Panaméricano at the corner of Beruti and San Martín. The casino operates daily from 2 pm to 4 am. Roulette, black jack, craps and slot machines are all here. There is an admission charge and the minimum bet is $5, the maximum $50. The loud music you hear is coming from **Cerebro**, the nicest discotheque in town. In a large private building at Juan Manuel de Rosas 405 (☎ 424-948), it is actually just behind the casino. Cerebro has all the latest sound and

light effects and draws a young crowd. Just up the street, **Rocket**, at 424 (☎ 423-2579) is also popular. Lots of singles here. A third choice, **Moritz** is on Avenida Mitre at 9 de Julio.

For a nightcap and some background music, head to the lakefront **Sinatra**, at Costanera and Centro Cívico.

Great after a day of skiing or trekking.

It features live music in the evening and is also open for breakfast and lunch. The art gallery at San Martín 64 presents a tango show at 10 pm on Friday and Saturday evenings, while the Hotel Los Andes, Moreno 594, offers a folkloric dance program at the same hours.

Shop Till You Drop

We would normally discourage shopping in a resort area where the typical item for sale is a shabbily made souvenir at an exorbitant price. Not so in Bariloche. Bariloche is a wonderful place to shop for handcrafted items, smoked meats and cheeses for picnics, and chocolate, both for you and friends back home. You will find many unique pieces and prices, while not low, are consistent with what you will pay in Buenos Aires.

✻ Tip

If you want some special gifts for the folks at home, you may want to save your shopping for Bariloche.

The chocolate shops are hard to resist. Made locally, chocolates are sold loose or pre-packaged. There are chocolate chunks and logs along with strips that look like spaghetti. Delicious and terrific gifts! Check out the variety at **Fenoglio**, either at their lovely alpine-style retail outlet at Mitre 252 (corner of Rolando) or at their factory just outside town at Avenida Bustillo Km 1.2. The huge selection at the supermarket-style **Chocolate Casero del Turista**, Mitre 239 between Rolando and Villegas, is hard to resist as are the sweets at **Rapa Nui Chocolates** across the street. **Mamushka** at Mitre 216, or **Abuela Goye** at Villegas 241 are just as tempting.

We never leave without something from **Cerámica Bariloche**, a local factory that produces colorful ceramic items. Most have the typical floral pattern that is favored here. The factory, here since the early 1950s, makes wall clocks, vases, serving platters and candlesticks. The main shop at Mitre 112 is open from 9:30 am to 9:30 pm every day but Sunday. They have another shop at Anasagasti 1515.

Cerámica Bariloche just celebrated its 50th anniversary.

Tito Testone at Quaglia 227 is another of our favorite shops. Featured here are beautiful copper and bronze pieces designed and handshaped by the shop's owner and namesake.

★ Did You Know?

Mr. Testone made the keys to the city which were presented to President Clinton when he visited in 1997.

Another "must-visit," **Origen** at Quaglia 274, is more like an art gallery than a gift shop. It reminds us of a craft shop in New England with its country style furnishings, wooden figures, baskets and ceramics. Indian motiffs and earthy tones are prevalent throughout. **Fitz-roy**, at Mitre 18, and **El Establo**, at Mitre 22, have a fine selection of handknit sweaters and Araucan ponchos, and other regional items such as handcrafted silver jewelry, leather items and wood carvings.

Martina Paz, San Martín 536, is an attractive shop with coffee mugs, condiment trays, knitted items and ceramics. The **Feria Artesanal** on Avenida Moreno at Villegas, is a long narrow building with stall after stall of artisans displaying their jewelry, most of which is silver and studded with colorful stones. Both the artists and their wares look like 60s retreads.

Outdoor enthusiasts should stop by **Martín Pescador** on Rolando near Moreno, which sells ski clothing and equipment, camping gear, bicycles and backpacks. If you're packing a picnic, stock up on fine smoked meats and cheeses at the **Familia Weiss** shop at Mitre 360.

Bariloche A-Z

AIRLINE OFFICES: Aerolíneas Argentinas (☎ 422-425) and **Austral** (☎ 422-076) share an office in the Galería Firenze on Quaglia. Hours are from 9 am to 7 pm weekdays and 9 am to 7 pm Saturdays. Closed Sunday.

AUTOMOBILE CLUB: The **Automovil Club Argentino** has an office at Avenida 12 de Octubre 785 (☎ 423-001).

BEAUTY PARLOR: The salon at locale 14 in the **Galería Via Firenze** on Quaglia keeps both men and women looking their best.

BOOKSTORE: English-language books are available at **Mileno** in the Galeria Firenze on Quaglia and at the **Libreria Cultura** at Elflein 78. Also stop by **Omega** at Villegas 242 which, in addition to books, sells beautiful stationery.

CAR RENTAL: Avis has an office at San Martín 130 (☎ 431-648).

CINEMA: Cine Arrayanes at Moreno 39 has first-run films in their original language.

CURRENCY EXCHANGE: You can change money in the **Banco de la Nación Argentina** at Mitre 180 and at the **Cambio Sudamerica** at Mitre 63.

GOLF: The 18-hour course at the Llao-Llao Resort (see description on page 279) is spectacular and easily one of the most beautiful

courses in the world. You can also try the nine-hole course at **Pinares Golf**, Km 14 on Bustillo.

HOSPITAL: For medical assistance, head to Moreno 601 (☎ 426-100).

LLAO LLAO: One of our recommended musts when visiting Bariloche is a lake excursion. Several tour boats operate from Puerto Pañuelos, the dock in Llao Llao. To get there take bus #20 ($2) to Llao, which you can catch in front of the Edelweiss Restaurant or the Hotel Panamericano.

NATIONAL PARK OFFICE: You can pick up maps and other information at San Martín 24 (☎ 423-111). Open weekdays from 9 am to 6 pm.

NEWSPAPERS: The local daily is the ***Rio Negro. The Buenos Aires Herald***, the English daily, is usually available in the afternoon.

PHARMACY: There are many pharmacies in the commercial center. Try San Martín 662 or Mitre 102 for essentials and cosmetics.

POST OFFICE: The main branch of the *Correos Argentinos* is in the large blue and white building on Moreno between Villegas and Quaglia. Hours are from 8 am to 8 pm Monday through Friday and from 8 am to 1 pm on Saturday.

REMISES: Private cars operating as taxis can be booked through **Puerto Remises** (☎ 0800-435-222) or **Auto Jet Remises** (☎ 0800-422-408).

SUPERMARKETS: La Anonima, Quaglia 331, is a large market with household goods as well as food. **Quorum** at Mitre 275 (see Best Places to Eat, page 287) has food only and a take out gourmet food section. Another great gourmet market if you are planning a picnic is the **Ahumadero Familia Weiss** at Mitre 360, which specializes in smoked fish and meats and fine cheeses.

TAXIS: 24-hour service is provided by **Radio Taxi Bariloche** (☎ 422-103).

TELEPHONES: Direct line calls to the United States can be made from **Bariloche Center** on San Martín at Pagano.

TELEPHONE DIAL CODE: 2944 (see page 14).

TENNIS: Bariloche Raquet Club is at Km 13 on the road to Llao Llao. You can book a court. There are also paddle ball courts.

TOURIST OFFICES: The **Municipal Tourist Office** is in the Civic Center. Unfortunately, most written materials are in Spanish and not all staff members speak English. Hours: 8:30 am to 8 pm, Monday through Saturday. The **Provincial Tourist Office** is at 12 de Octubre 605 at Villegas. Here, you can pick up a listing of cultural events and assorted information.

Córdoba

When the original settlers first came to Córdoba from Peru in the 17th century, they praised the region for its beautiful weather and landscape of endless plains and gentle sierras, much like those of Castille and Andalucia in their native Spain. They were no less impressed by the abundance of fish in her rivers and streams, and by the great variety of birds and wild animals roaming the *pampas*. The same holds true today. Thousands of visitors are drawn to Córdoba's quaint villages and riverside resorts for many of the same reasons.

The city of Córdoba is no less lovely. Founded in 1573 by Jerónimo Luis De Cabrera, a Spaniard from the southern city of Seville, it is home to many of the country's finest examples of colonial architecture. As you wander through the historic district, visiting churches from centuries past, and stroll under the leafy canopies of her pedestrian walkways, perhaps stopping for coffee at a sidewalk café, you'll quickly fall into Córdoba's relaxed pace. You'll forget that you're in one of Argentina's most progressive cities, an industrial center, second only to Buenos Aires.

History

When **Jerónimo Luis de Cabrera** founded Córdoba de la Nueva Andalucia on the banks of the Suquía River, he did so in accordance with the Spanish conventions of the period which

required both a water supply and the presence of friendly Indians, who would supply the colonists' need for labor. While the Suquía River easily filled the first requirement, the Comechingón Indians fulfilled the second, quickly becoming a labor force for raising sheep and mules as well as for agriculture. Cabrera belonged to the wave of Spaniards who crossed into Argentina from Peru and Chile via Inca trade routes to establish settlements in the northwestern corner of the country. The most noteworthy, Santiago del Estero, founded by Francisco de Aguirre in 1553, was the starting point for Cabrera's journey. His intention was to establish a settlement linking the trade routes of Alto Peru, El Cuyo and Buenos Aires. Indeed, by 1650 Córdoba had displaced Santiago del Estero as the nation's major urban center.

Religion and academics figure strongly in Córdoba's history. Shortly after the city's founding several religious orders established themselves there, hence earning her the nickname of "the city of churches." (You'll visit many of these as you tour the colonial district.) Chief among them were the Jesuits, the Franciscans and the Carmelite Sisters.

★ Did You Know?

Córdoba was one of the most important Jesuit centers in South America until they were expelled by Spain in 1767.

In 1613, the Jesuit Bishop Hernando de Trejo y Sanabria founded the nation's first university in Córdoba, the Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, turning the city into a center of higher learning and earning her a second nickname which is still used today: "La Docta" – The Learned.

The church and the university dominated the city's first three centuries which, with the exception of a few tumultuous events, were relatively tranquil. Midway through the 20th century, however, Córdoba began to experience a period of strong economic growth, still visible in the 1990s. Since 1947, with its growth as an agricultural and industrial capital, the city's population has surged from 350,000 to 1,300,000. Fiat and Renault have plants here, as do several other multinational corporations.

Córdoba is the name of the province and the capital city. It is the second largest city in the country.

Córdoba's cultural life has also intensified. Residents and visitors enjoy several annual music and cultural festivals, both national and international. The city is home to numerous small theaters, *cine clubs* (movie clubs), and café shows in addition to the Teatro Libertador General San Martín, a frequent host to great performances on tour from Buenos Aires and other major cities throughout South America.

All in all, while faithful to her colonial roots and traditions, Córdoba is a vibrant and dynamic modern city.

Geography/Topography

The province of Córdoba could easily be called the "breadbasket of Argentina." Not only is this province of seemingly endless plains, rolling hills, rivers, lakes and streams a vacation paradise, it is also one of the nation's most important industrial and agricultural regions.

Located in the center of the country, almost equidistant from the Andes in the west and the Atlantic in the east, its 165,321 square kilometers (63,814 square miles) are crossed by three mountain ranges running north to south, and five rivers. The latter, formed by seasonal rains and winter thaws, have been dammed in many places to create both irrigation systems and the region's principal tourist attraction, her many lakes.

Córdoba's northern landscape is characterized by the flat jungle plains of the **Gran Chaco**, which extends from Mato Grosso in Brazil south to the Rio Salado in Argentina, west to the Andes and east to the Paraguay River.

★ Did You Know?

Native to the region is the *quebracho*, a tree known for the superb quality of its wood as well as its resin, used in the tanning of leather.

The fertile *pampas*, home of the legendary *gaucho*, dominate the southern portion of the province.

★ Did You Know?

Of Quechua origin, the word "pampa" means treeless plain and aptly describes the flat prairie lands or *pampa seca,* west of Córdoba.

Moving east, the gentle hills of the **Central Sierra** lead to the fertile farmlands of the *pampa húmeda,* home of vast *estancias* where you'll pass fields of grazing cattle watched over by *gauchos*, breeding farms for race horses and polo ponies, and endless fields of corn, wheat and barley swaying in the breeze.

The varied landscape is home to numerous species of flora and fauna. Woods such as cedar and *quebracho*, along with cotton and other textile-producing plants, flourish in the sub-tropical Chaco, while fruits and cereals are cultivated throughout the *pampas*. Pumas and other wild cats are not unknown. Guanacos, vizcachas, peccaries, foxes and boars are also common, along with small deer, weasels, rabbits and hares. Bird watchers will find ostriches, flamingoes, storks, falcons, partridges and herons, ducks, parrots and sparrows. Several species of reptiles and snakes also make their home here.

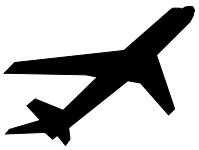
Climate

Córdoba enjoys a temperate climate with sunny skies all year long. Winters are quite mild with temperatures seldom dipping below 45°F. Days can get quite warm during the summer months (December to February); temperatures occa-

sionally rise as high as 100°F. But nights are generally cool. Summer is the peak season for resorts throughout the province.

*** Tip**

If you're planning to visit in summer, it is a good idea to reserve ahead.



Getting There

The city is easily accessible by bus, car or plane. Given its central location, the city serves as a hub for both air and land transportation. **Aerolineas Argentinas** offers several flights daily to and from Buenos Aires, while **Austral** covers cities throughout the rest of the country, including Rosario, Mendoza, Tucumán and Santiago del Estero. If you're traveling to Córdoba from outside the country, you will probably have to change planes in Buenos Aires.

Buses from throughout the country and Chile arrive daily. Both the train and bus stations are conveniently located in center city on Bulevar Presidente J.D. Perón. Service between Córdoba and Buenos Aires (Retiro Station) is provided by the **ABLO** bus company (☎ 4313-2835).

*** Tip**

There is no train service linking Córdoba with Buenos Aires and other cities, but the recent privatization of the railroad makes development of such rail service more likely.

If you're driving, National Routes 8, 9, 19 35 and 60 intersect the city. If you're coming from Mendoza look for Provincial Route 20 to take you into the city.

Arrival

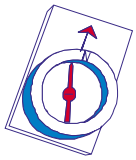
Córdoba's modern **Pajas Blancas International Airport** is eight kilometers (five miles) north of the city center . Most car rental agencies have booths here, as does the Tourist Office. Pick up a map before heading out.

A **remis** cab into the city is $11. Airport vans (**combis**) will take you into the center of the city and cost only $2. If you don't have much luggage and are trying to keep expenses down consider a public bus (70¢).

*** Tip**

Be sure to let the driver know where you want to get off before taking a seat.

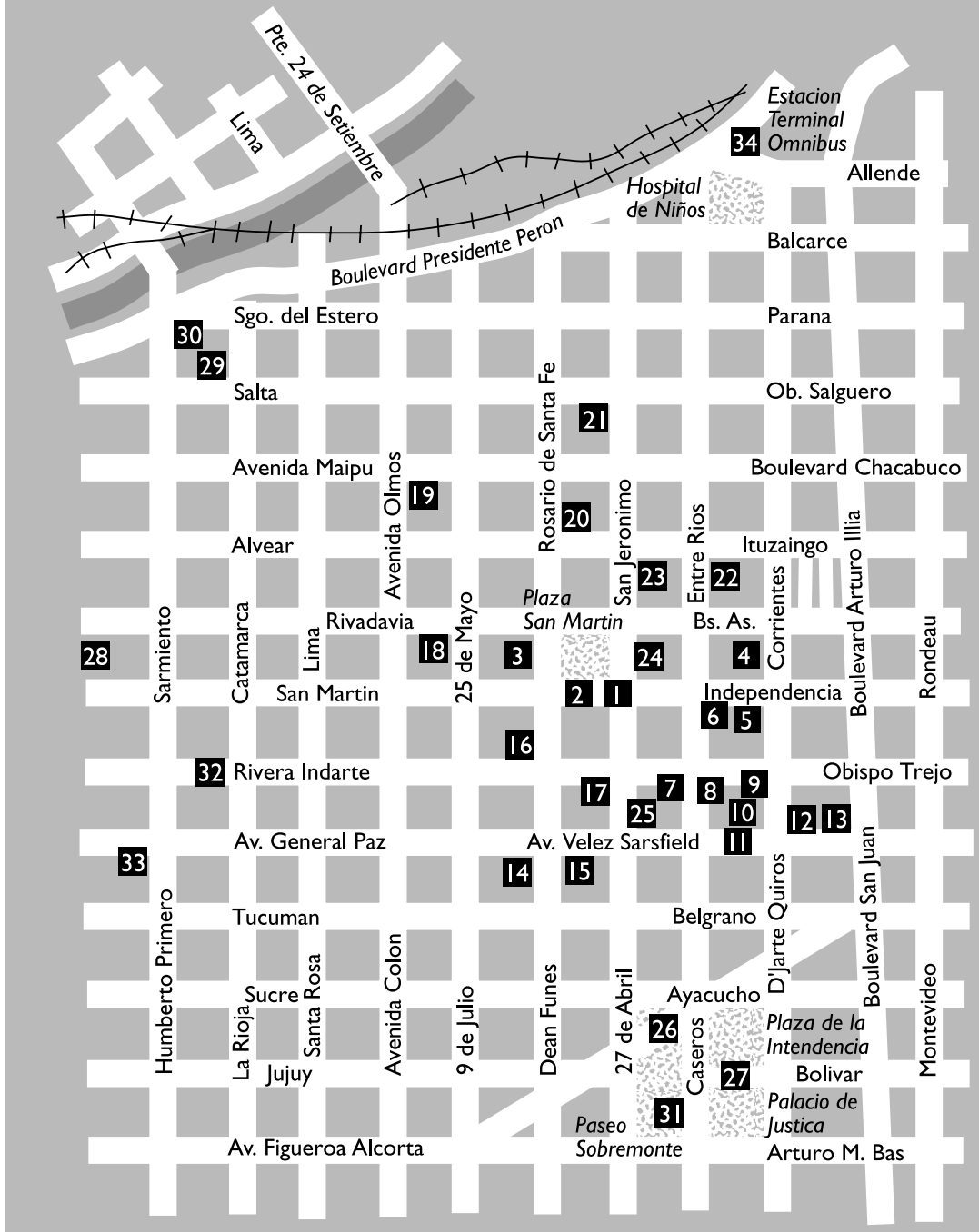
Orientation



Typical of cities colonized by the Spanish, Córdoba was designed in a grid-like pattern with the **Plaza San Martín** at its heart. You'll probably spend most of your time in the colonial district, concentrated among the blocks surrounding the plaza. With the help of a map supplied by the tourist office, you should have little or no trouble finding your way around the city.

Just as in many South American cities, several streets here change names at the center of the

Downtown Córdoba



city, which is marked by the Plaza San Martín. Avenidas and bulevares (avenues and boulevards) cross the city north to south and calles (streets), east to west. Hence, **Avenida Gen-**

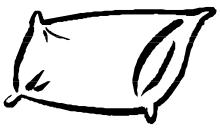
1. Iglesia Catedral
2. Cabildo Histórico
3. Centro Municipal de Inf. y Exposiciones Obispo Mercadillo
4. Centrol de Exposiciones J. Malanca
5. Iglesia de la Teresias
6. Museo de Arte Religioso Juan de Tejeda
7. Museo Religioso Fray J. Antonio de San Alberto
8. Iglesia de la Compañia de Jesus
9. Universidad Nacional de Córdoba
10. Colegio Nacional de Monserrat
11. Academia Nacional de Ciencias
12. Teatro del Libertador Gral. San Martín
13. Museo del Teatro y de la Música Cristóbal de Aguilar
14. Museo Municipal de Bellas Artes Dr. General Pérez
15. Basilica de Santo Domingo
16. Legislatura
17. Iglesia de Santa Catalina de Siena
18. Basilica de la Merced
19. Iglesia del Pilar
20. Museo Histórico Provincial Marqués de Sobremonte
21. Iglesia de San Roque
22. Iglesia de San Francisco
23. Banco Provincia de Córdoba
24. Teatro Real
25. Banco Social de Córdoba
26. Palacio Municipal 6 de Julio
27. Palacio de Justicia
28. Mercado Norte
29. Hospital de Urgencias
30. Asistencia Pública
31. Paseo Sobremonte
32. Cripta
33. Casona Municipal
34. Estación Terminal de Omnibus

eral Paz, one of the main thoroughfares of the city, becomes **Avenida Vélez Sársfield** south of **27 de Abril** (which runs along the south side of the plaza). Similarly, **Avenida San Martín** becomes **Independencia** when it meets the Plaza and **Calle 25 de Mayo** becomes **9 de Julio**, a major shopping street.

Córdoba is a real walking city. Several of the streets in the colonial district are *peatonales*, shady pedestrian malls where you'll find outdoor cafés, lovely shops and plenty of street performers. These include **Independencia**, **9 de Julio**, **Dean Funes** and **Obispo Trejo**, which is also known as the Paseo de las Flores.

Avenida M.T. de Alvear (which becomes Avenida Figueroa Alacorta) runs alongside La Cañada.

The city doesn't lack for green areas. The largest of these is the **Parque Sarmiento** in the southeast corner of the city. Parks and gardens line the **Río Suquía**, which runs across the top of the city and then down along its eastern border. **La Cañada**, a brook off the Suquía, bisects the city north to south and borders the western edge of the colonial district. Its promenade is a favorite of strollers, with its romantic stone bridges and leafy tipa trees. In the northern sector of the city is the **Cerro de las Rosas**, an affluent residential district, once a center for the cultivation of roses. Many fine restaurants and nightclubs are beginning to set up shop there.



Best Places to Stay in Córdoba

Córdoba offers a fine selection of quality three- and four-star hotels where rooms are comfortable and the service is attentive and friendly.

The majority have outdoor pools and offer business services. Prices are moderate and we found most to be an exceptional value. It is only recently, in the late 1990s, that five-star hotels have opened here. Our selections, the Sheraton and the Córdoba Plaza International (the only five-stars in Córdoba), are both new to the city and to this guidebook. In keeping with hotels throughout the country, practically all offer a generous breakfast buffet featuring fresh juices, fruit, cold cuts, cheeses**,** breads and pastries, and assorted jams and marmalades.

If you prefer a lakeside setting or would just like a break from the city, consider staying in **Carlos Paz**, a resort town 35 miles outside Córdoba. Options include the **Hotel Libertador** and the **Portal del Lago Hotel.** Both are described in the *Excursion along the Camino de la Punilla* (page 345).

Alive Price Scale

Deluxe: . . $200+
Expensive: . $120+
Moderate: $60-120
Inexpensive: $35-60
Budget: under $35

SHERATON CORDOBA HOTEL ☆☆☆☆☆
Av. Duarte Quirós 1300
☎ *351-488-9000 (In Buenos Aires, 4318-9390; Argentina toll-free 0800-888-3535; US 800-325-3535); fax 351-488-9150*
188 rooms, 14 floors
www.sheraton.com
Expensive

The harsh exterior of this ultra-modern, sixteen-sided, steel and glass tower belies the beautifully appointed decor, warmth and friendly service which awaits guests inside the brand new Sheraton. Designed with the modern business traveler in mind, rooms are

equipped with hook-ups for personal computers and fax/modems, and are furnished in accordance with the high standards set by five-star Sheratons all over the world. Non-smoking and handicap-accessible rooms are available. Recreational facilities include a fitness center with sauna and massage, outdoor pool, tennis court and a beauty salon. Others may choose to unwind in the piano bar in the atrium-style lobby (complete with glass elevator). The **Las Sierras** restaurant is among the most elegant in the city, while more casual fare is available at **La Pampa.** The Sheraton is six blocks from downtown, across from the Nuevo Centro Shopping Center.

A five-star hotel with a four-star price tag!

CORDOBA PLAZA INTERNATIONAL ☆☆☆☆
San Jerónimo 137
☎ *351-426-8900*
Fax (toll-free in Argentina) 0-800-888-2677
110 rooms, 2 suites
Expensive
E-mail corplaza@satlink.com.ar

For comfort and location, this is a fine choice.

The Córdoba Plaza boasts a convenient downtown location, just steps away from major banks and office buildings. Rooms are spacious and tastefully furnished. Facilities include a business center with meeting facilities, an outdoor pool with sundeck, a fitness center and sauna, a paddle tennis court and an international restaurant.

CORDOBA PARK HOTEL ☆☆☆☆
Bv. San Juan 165
☎ *351-420-7021 (in Buenos Aires, 4326-0167)*
Fax 351-424-5773
112 rooms, 12 suites
Executive services
Rooftop pool
Breakfast buffet
Expensive

Although classified as a four-star hotel, the Córdoba Park Plaza easily merits a five. It has an optimal location on the Plaza Vélez Sársfield, just steps away from La Cañada and across from the Patio Olmos Shopping Center. There is sightseeing and shopping, along with the full range of business services, including private offices with personal computers and fax machines, and conference facilities. There is also a rooftop pool, sundeck and sauna. An especially delightful staff make it a perfect choice for those wishing to mix business with pleasure. A fairly new hotel, its rooms are modern and tastefully furnished. All are equipped with individually controlled air conditioning and heat as well as cable and local television, two private video channels and private cd channels for music.

Sound proof windows keep street noises to a minimum.

A generous breakfast buffet featuring fresh fruits and juices, *medias lunas*, cereals, eggs and cold cuts as well as champagne on Sunday is included in your room rate. Special weekend and corporate rates are available.

PANORAMA HOTEL ☆☆☆☆
Marcel T. de Alvear 251 (La Cañada)
☎ *351-420-4000*
Fax 351-424-5248
146 rooms, 30 suites
Executive services; fitness center; breakfast buffet
Expensive
www.hotelpanorama.com
E-mail panorama@onenet.com.ar

The Panorama is another four-star hotel which has everything a five-star has except a five-star price. Whether you're working out on the treadmill or a stationary bike or unwinding in the jacuzzi, you'll enjoy spectacular views of the city and nearby sierras from the 14th floor **Terraza Club** fitness center. The fitness center also features a small swimming pool, tanning bed and bar. Business facilities include four conference rooms with audio visual equipment, offices with telephones, typewriters, fax machines and banquet services. An elegant lobby, fine restaurant, comfortable guest rooms and privileged location alongside the Cañada round out the list of amenities that make the Panorama a favorite of many regular visitors to Córdoba.

PANORAMA BUSINESS HOTEL ☆☆☆☆
Marcel T. de Alvear 363 (La Cañada)
☎ *351-420-3900; fax 351-420-3900*
72 rooms
Executive services; fitness center; breakfast buffet
Expensive
www.hotelpanorama.com
E-mail business@onenet.com.ar

Panorama's new business hotel caters to the modern business traveler. Rooms feature a desk equipped with a fax and hook-up for a personal computer. Business suites have a living and dining room and separate bedrooms as well as a jacuzzi for after hours. Meeting facilities can handle up to 170 persons. Additional amenities include 24-hour room service, a fitness center with sauna and an outdoor pool.

HOTEL DE LA CAÑADA ☆☆☆
Marcelo T. de Alvear 580 (La Cañada)
☎ *351-421-4649*
Fax 351-423-1227
50 rooms
Conference center
Breakfast
Moderate

Located alongside the Cañada, two blocks south of the Plaza Vélez Sársfield, the Hotel de la Cañada is a fine choice. Though not quite as luxurious, and slightly further from shopping and sightseeing than our previous selections, these differences are appropriately reflected in the price. The large outdoor terrace overlooking la Cañada is ideal for dining or cocktails.

As we found to be true virtually everywhere we went in Córdoba, service here is exceptionally friendly.

HOTEL MEDITERRANEO ☆☆☆
Marcelo T. de Alvear 10
☎ *351-424-0086*
Fax 351-424-0111
60 rooms
Moderate
E-mail hotelmed@satlink.com

Located along the Cañada in a lovely part of the city, the Hotel Mediterraneo is comfortable and reasonably priced. Rooms are simply furnished and homey. A rooftop pool and cable TV are the amenities you'll enjoy here. Underground parking is a plus if you're driving.

DUCAL SUITES HOTEL ☆☆☆☆

Corrientes 207
☎ 351-426-8888 (in Buenos Aires, 4326-0167)
Fax 351-426-8840
82 suites
Business services
Rooftop pool/fitness center
Breakfast buffet
Expensive

Situated in the heart of the textile and trading district, the Ducal Suites caters especially to business travelers and frequently hosts trade shows, conferences and conventions. Although small for suites, rooms are comfortably furnished and come equipped with all the amenities expected of a four-star hotel, including a mini-bar. There is a rooftop pool and sundeck, as well as a small fitness center with sauna and jacuzzi. The dining atrium is especially lovely.

GRAN HOTEL DORA ☆☆☆

Calle Entre Ríos 70
☎ 351-421-2030
Fax 351-424-0167
126 rooms
Breakfast included
Moderate

If you enjoy staying in the midst of the action, then the Gran Hotel Dora, just a block away from Independencia and two blocks from the Plaza San Martín, is well worth your consideration. Although it does not offer the extras of our previous selections, rooms here are far more than adequate. The Dora has sister hotels in Buenos Aires and Mar del Plata.

WINDSOR HOTEL ☆☆☆
Buenos Aires 214
☎ *351-422-4012*
Fax 351-422-4012
60 rooms
Breakfast included
Moderate

Not luxurious, but comfortable.

Although furnishings appear to date back to when the hotel first opened in 1956, the Windsor continues to represent a solid value. Around the corner from the Gran Hotel Dora, it is another fine choice for those who like to be in the center of the action.

HOTEL FELIPE II ☆☆☆
San Jerónimo 279
☎ *351-425-5500*
Fax 351-425-5500
Business services
Breakfast included
Moderate

For overall value, the Felipe II ranks among the best hotels in the city and is a favorite of thrifty business travelers. 24-hour room service, conference facilities and laundry service are among the perks here.

HOTEL CESAR CARMEN ☆☆☆
Avenida Amadeo Sabattini 459 at Bajada Pucará
☎ 351-422-9100
Fax 351-422-3470
60 rooms
Pool
Breakfast included
Moderate

Most rooms have balconies.

Those who enjoy visiting the city, but prefer to stay in a more suburban setting, should consider the Cesar Carmen Hotel, a three-minute cab ride from the center of town. The quiet, friendly atmosphere is characteristic of the establishment. The hotel's spacious wood-hued lobby, replete with potted plants and leather couches, is a popular gathering place, as is the outdoor pool and adjacent snack bar.

The hotel tour service offers escorted trips with bilingual guides to places of interest throughout the province. The hotel is run by the Automobile Club of Argentina. (Members enjoy a discounted rate).

Best Places to Eat

Second to Buenos Aires in number of restaurants, Córdoba is not short of dining options.

Alive Price Scale

(per person)
Expensive: . $50+
Moderate: . . $25+
Inexpensive: . . $25-

✻ Tip

Meals here run on the same schedule as Buenos Aires, so don't expect to be served in a restaurant before 9 pm.

Beef, of course, is the mainstay of most menus. Regional specialties include beef dishes such as *carbonada* and *locro.* C*arbonada* is made with beef and peaches, while the especially filling *locro* is made with several different types of meat and sausage along with corn or wheat. Pizza could also be considered a regional specialty since, given the city's large Italian population, pizzerias abound.

Cordoba's temperate climate is especially conducive to a late afternoon coffee at a sidewalk café. Pastries are especially good and are often filled with *dulce de leche, dulce de batata* (sweet potato jam) or jams and jellies made from the native fruits and sugar cane.

Be prepared to indulge.

GUCCIO RESTAURANT
Avenida Hipolito Yrigoyen 81
☎ *422-5135*
Continental
Reservations requested
Expensive

If we were asked to compile a list of Argentina's most elegant restaurants, Guccio would easily be one of our top selections. Richly hued wooden walls, a mosaic ceiling, varnished parquet floors, and tables set with gorgeous stemware, lovely flowers and quietly flickering candles create an ambience of old world refinement. The menu is just as refined, with appetizers such as *pate Guccio en salsa naranja* (pate in an orange sauce) and *crêpes de mariscos* (shellfish crêpes). Entrées include *lomo Guccio* (sirloin), *milanesitos de pollo en crema de choclo* (chicken

filets served in a creamed corn sauce) and *trucha al chablis* (trout al chablis). There is little doubt why *cordobeses* choose Guccio for special occasions.

LAS SIERRAS
Sheraton Hotel
Av. Duarte Quirós 1300
☎ *488-9000*
International/Caribbean
Expensive

Be sure to try one of the delicious spinach rolls in the breadbasket.

Despite the name, Caribbean-inspired seafood dishes dominate the menu at the elegant Las Sierras restaurant. Decor, presentation and service are on par with a first-class restaurant anywhere in the world, such as New York's Le Cirque. Menu items include *escabeche de mero, cebiche langostinos (*cold lobster marinated in lime*), buco lenguado* (sole prepared with cashews and grapefruit), *pollo al bambu* (chicken in a curry and banana sauce) and surf & turf (no explanation needed). Las Sierras is perfect for a special occassion or a romantic evening. A pianist and singer add to the ambience and provide a for a lovely evening. For more casual dining, **La Pampa** next door features a fine dinner buffet most evenings.

LA COCINA DE OSES
Independencia 512
☎ *423-0508*
French & International
12 pm-3 pm; 8 pm-midnight
Moderate

Although this bi-level restaurant may not be as elegant as Guccio, its menu is just as impressive. Selections include *salmón poché con salsa tartara* (poached salmon with tartar sauce), *lomo pimienta con papas a la crema* (pepper steak with creamed potatoes), *pollo de la nueva Córdoba con crema a la cereza con cognac* (new Cordoba-style chicken with a cream of cherry cognac sauce) and the *grand bistek,* steak served with tomato glacé, pâté de foie gras, noisette potatoes and bordelaise sauce.

DOÑA ANASTASIA
Blvd. San Juan 325
☎ *424-1716*
Seafood
Lunch & dinner
Moderate

Antique copper pieces and a beautiful wooden beamed ceiling create a warm atmosphere at this lovely restaurant. Located in a private home. The specialty is seafood, but just like any other restaurant in Argentina, you can get a good steak here.

El Arrabal and Anastasia are owned by the same management.

EL ARRABAL
Fructuoso Rivera at the corner of Belgrano
☎ *428-2495*
Parrillada & International
Open noon to midnight
Moderate

El Arrabal is a combination art gallery, tango hall, salón de té, parrilla and tango/piano bar. The restaurant specializes in grilled meats and chicken. Music starts around 8 pm. This is a

lovely place for tea in the afternonn and on the weekends it doubles as a tango/piano bar.

MI CASA
Avenida Vélez Sársfield 214
☎ 234-835 (reservations requested)
Spanish
Lunch & dinner
Expensive

It seems that Mi Casa attracts Córdoba's best dressed and best looking residents. So if you decide to dine here, be sure to dress the part and be prepared for some great people watching. Head to the bar in the rear for the latter. Very Spanish, both in decor and in menu, the dining room is spread out among several levels, with stone walls and a beamed ceiling giving it a very majestic air. If you're dining with a friend, the *paella Valenciana* for two is a terrific choice. Our other favorite entrées include the *cazuela de mariscos, congrio salsa verde* (eel in a green sauce) and the *bife chorizo.*

LA YAYA
Independencia 468
☎ 425-5010
Steakhouse
Lunch & dinner
Moderate

The three-course executive menu is an excellent value.

If your schedule doesn't allow for a trip to an *estancia*, a meal at La YaYa is the next best thing. The owners have created the same ambience and rustic setting you would enjoy at their *estancia*, the Santa Clara. Need we mention that the menu features grilled meats and ham

fresh from their farm? Desserts and pastas are homemade too.

LA OBRA: CASA DE CARNES
La Cañada
☎ *426-0612*
Steakhouse
Open late

Across from La Mamma, this bi-level steakhouse is in a lovely setting overlooking La Cañada. Steaks here are the best in the city.

BETOS LOMITOS-PARRILLA
Bv. San Juan 454
☎ *424-6225*
Steakhouse
Lunch & dinner
Inexpensive

Betos is the epitome of the Argentine *parrilla* where a fantastic steak typically runs under $10. Designed to resemble an *estancia*, the brick walls are decorated with wagon wheels and leather wall hangings and there are several fire places throughout the large dining room. Steaks average $7 to $9.50, while grilled chicken is slightly less.

A small branch of Betos is located in the Nuevocentro Shopping Center.

✻ Tip

It is very popular, so plan on getting here before 10:30 pm if you don't want to wait for a table.

Italian Restaurants

Since Córdoba has the highest concentration of Italians of any city in Argentina, it is no surprise that it has a great many Italian restaurants. Pizza places abound. **Pizzas Bocatto**, a chain with branches all over the country, are located in the shopping centers as well on 9 de Julio. They serve pasta as well. If you especially enjoy Italian food, you'll be very happy in Córdoba.

IL GATTO
Avenida Colón 628
☎ *481-6761*
Italian
Lunch & dinner daily
Inexpensive to moderate

King Sao next door is a fine choice for coffee and dessert.

Don't expect a quiet evening here. A lively crowd frequents this very popular Italian trattoria, which sports red checkered tablecloths and cat motifs on the dishes. Typical Italian food is served in generous portions. This is the nicest of three Il Gatto restaurants in Córdoba. The others are at General Paz 120 and Rafael Núñez 3856. There is another Il Gatto in Carlos Paz on Libertad at the corner of Belgrano, as well as in Buenos Aires.

LA MAMMA
Figueroa Alcorta 270 (on La Cañada)
☎ *426-0610*
Italian
Lunch and dinner
Moderate

Given the homey atmosphere, La Mama is a very fitting name for this Italian trattoria in a red brick house alongside La Cañada. This is the perfect place to share a bottle of wine with one of their many antipastos or fresh fruit and cheese platters.

Confiterías

If you've already been to Buenos Aires, you undoubtedly discovered that cafés are an integral and quite pleasant part of the Argentine lifestyle. Córdoba's temperate climate and lovely plazas and pedestrian malls are perfect for outdoor cafés.

Our first two selections are diagonally across from each other on the Plaza San Martín.

CONFITERÍA DE LA PLAZA

Avenida Buenos Aires on Plaza San Martín

Located across the plaza from the Cathedral and the Cabildo, the Confitería de la Plaza has been an institution in Córdoba for years, and so will it continue to be. It reminds us of the very traditional St. James in Buenos Aires, with its antique organs, dark paneled walls, and antique cash registers and typewriters all about. The upstairs tables offer a fine vantage point for watching the "goings-on" in the plaza, or sit at one of the many outdoor tables.

A lovely spot for tea in the afternoon or a light meal.

CAFÉ SOROCABANA

Calle San Jerónimo on Plaza San Martín

Umbrellas top the tables at the equally popular Café Sorocabana. In addition to pastries and finger sandwiches, the Sorocabana features pizza, and is just right for lunch.

KING SAO
Avenida Colón at the corner of Av. Figueroa Alacorta (La Cañada)

It would be hard to find a lovelier location for a *confitería* in Córdoba than alongside La Cañada. Try to get one of the tables alongside the generous picture windows. In addition to cakes and pastries, King Sao also offers simple meals and snacks.

OK TU LUGAR
Avenida General Paz 125

McDonald's and Il Gatto are across the street. McDonald's is also in the Patio Olmos Shopping Center.

Come early and join rushing executives as they stop in for a quick café and a *media luna* on their way to work. Later on they'll mingle at a more leisurely pace over lunch and dinner or tea. The colorful decor (red dominates) reminds us of an old-fashioned Coca Cola ad.

ROBERTINO
Avenida Castro Barros 299
Open 24 hours

If you're out late (when won't you be in Argentina?) and looking for coffee and conversation, this lovely café will be perfect. Friends meet here at all hours, day or night, indoors or out. If you're alone, don't be shy. Join the conversation.

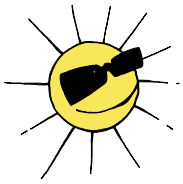
PETRUZKA CAFÉ
Corner of 9 de Julio y Tucumán

Petruzka is similar to, although somewhat smaller than, a traditional *confitería* in Buenos Aires.

EL RUEDO
Corner of Obispo Tejo and 27 de Abril

The seemingly hundreds of tables lining Obispo Trejo not far from the Santa Catalina Convent belong to this fine *confitería* at the corner of 27 de Abril.

Dawn To Dusk



Colonial charm and lovely scenery make Córdoba a delightful place to unwind. Whether you're a city dweller or country type, you'll still feel quite at home here.

✻ Tip

We recommend that you spend a day or two in the city and then venture out into the countryside.

Walking Tour

The best way to get the feel for any new city is by walking. Córdoba is no exception. In fact, Córdoba is a city made for strolling, either under a leafy canopy on one of its many pedestrian shopping streets, along the banks of the Cañada or the Suquía or through the colonial district. Since you will easily find your way along the Cañada and the shopping streets, we've designed this walk to help you get the most out of the colonial section of the city, which is clustered in the blocks surrounding

Walking here is a pleasure. Streets are numbered, making it easy to find your way.

the Plaza San Martín. Take the time to read the plaques the city has mounted outside many of the historic buildings. Peek into the interior courtyards of the colonial homes. Let your imagination run free, and you'll easily find yourself transported back to the colonial period.

We'll start our walk outside the Córdoba Park Hotel on the **Plaza Vélez Sársfield** and work our way to the **Plaza San Martín.**

Typical of the cities settled by the Spanish, Córdoba was designed in a rectangular grid pattern with the Plaza San Martín as its heart. The majority of the city's most historic buildings are within a few blocks of the plaza.

Heading north on Avenida Vélez Sarsfield, our first stop will be the **Teatro del Libertador General San Martín** (General San Martín Theater) at 365. Inaugurated in 1891, it is older than the Teatro Colón of Buenos Aires, which was inaugurated in 1908. Its French Nouveau style is typical of the buildings constructed in the latter part of the 19th century. The lovely interior is highlighted by four tiers of seats and boxes. Well-known Argentine and international artists perform here frequently.

Check the listings in La Voz del Interior for performances during your stay. (The box office is open from 9 am to 1 pm and from 3 to 7 pm).

The theater's history is documented in the **Museo del Teatro y de la Música Cristóbal de Aguilar**.

Note how crisp the air feels.

Large plaques in front of important buildings and sites explain their history.

A little farther up the block at 249 Vélez Sársfield is the **Academia Nacional de Ciencias,** which dates back to 1899. The academy itself was founded by President Sarmiento in 1869. Today it is home to the **Dr. Alfredo Stelzner Minerology and Geology Museum** as well as a **Botany Museum.**

Turn right onto Calle Duarte Quirós. You're now in the midst of Córdoba's Jesuit history. This block is known as the **Manzana de las Luces**, a reference to the Enlightenment, or **Siglo de las Luces** as it is known in Spanish, when this area was really the focal point of the religious and cultural life of the city.

First on the block is the **Colegio Nacional de Montserrat**, founded in April of 1695. The exterior of the building was redone in 1928 in a Spanish Renaissance style. Take note of the school's unique clock tower before moving on to the interior patio. Be sure to visit the library for a look at the school's gallery, which includes a portrait of Duarte Quirós dating back to around 1750, as well as a 1763 painting by Luis Gonzaga Coni.

After leaving the school, stroll along the **Peatonal Obispo Trejo,** also known as the Paseo de Las Flores, to the city's original university (**La Universidad Nacional de Córdoba**). The first in the Río de la Plata, it was founded by the Jesuit Bishop Hernando de Trejo y Sanabria in 1613 and served as a center of higher learning throughout the colonial

period, thus earning Córdoba the nickname "La Docta" – "The Learned." The university was administered by the Jesuit Fathers until they were expelled from South America by the Spanish Crown in 1767. The building was restored under the direction of the Argentine Architect Kronfus. The two-story building, a colonial-style cloister by design, surrounds a lovely patio in its interior, which has at its center a bronze statue of Fray Trejo y Sanabria. In the library is a small altar dedicated to Dr. Dalmacio Vélez Sársfield, author of Argentina's Civil Code.

Next door to the University is the Jesuit Church, **La Iglesia de la Compañía de Jesús**, the city's only church whose structure dates back to the 17th century. Constructed between 1644 and 1674, the stern austerity of its facade makes the opulence of the interior all the more surprising. Many of the baroque altars were installed during the 18th century, while the Carrera marble work on the walls is from the 19th century. The portraits of the Apostles in the main nave are by the Córdobes painter Genaro Pérez. Most striking, however, is the church's ceiling, especially given the way in which its design came about.

Building the Church

Midway through construction, the builders ran out of the funds needed to finish it using the large stones for the ceiling, as was customary during that

period, nor would the walls have been able to support such weight. Jesuit brother Phillipe Lemer offered an ingenious solution. Cedar was brought from the Jesuit *reducciones* in Misiones Province. Using wooden pegs, the builders crafted the frame of an inverted hull of a ship to form the roof. The ribs were coated with gold, and the spaces in between were filled in with tiles adorned by colorful arabesques and branches of leaves. Construction took nearly 12 years to complete. Amazingly, the roof has remained watertight after 300 years and the original pegs are still in place. Incidentally, the church's sacristy and *retablo* were also made from cedar. These, however, were moved to the Cathedral upon the expulsion of the Jesuits and later to the Church of Tulumba.

A similar system was used to form the roof of the **Capilla Doméstica** (Domestic Chapel) next door, which was completed three years earlier. In its case, canes of a native wood that had been bound together with leather straps and then plastered over and covered with painted cloth. The chapel's baroque alter is also made of cedar from Misiones.

After leaving the Chapel, turn right on Caseros and head towards Independencia, where you'll make a left. Your tour of the Manzana de las Luces continues with the **Monasterio de las Carmelitas Descalzas de San José** (the Church and Convent of Carmelite Nuns). Also

known as **Las Teresas,** the complex consists of the convents of San José and Santa Catalina (located behind the Cathedral on Obispo Trejo), as well as the Carmelite convent and chapel.

This was the birthplace of Córdoba's first local poet, Fray Luis de Tejada (1604-1680). It has been home to the cloistered nuns of the Carmelite order since its founding in 1628 by the poet's father Don Juan de Tejada, who donated the property to the order. Fifteen years earlier Fray Fernando de Trejo y Sanabria had founded the **Santa Catalina Monastery** – located behind the Cathedral one block up on Obispo Trejo – with money donated by Don Juan's wife, Doña Leonor de Tejada.

Take note of the baroque style of the entrance to the convent. The ornate frieze above the gateway is reminiscent of the elaborate *peinetones* (combs) which were much in favor among the aristocratic women of the period. Although the chapel dates back to the 17th century, most of the construction is from the 18th, when it was substantially renovated. The woodwork is especially noteworthy. Be sure to take a close look at the choir, a superb tribute to the skill of the colonial (18th century) artisan. A life-size statue of Santa Teresa de Jesús graces the altar.

Most of the convent is, of course, closed to the public. However, visitors can get an insight into cloistered life at the **Juan de Tejeda Religious Arts Museum** in the pink-colored main cloister. Several rooms have been decorated to

recreate cloister life. Also on display are the Treasures of the Cathedral, along with ceremonial objects, including vestments, valuable religious images, linens, tapestries and relics. The museum is open Wednesday through Saturday from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm.

Leaving Las Teresas, continue along Independencia to the **Plaza San Martín**, the heart of Colonial Córdoba.

The plaza's importance has not diminished in the 20th century. Always a beehive of activity, most of the pedestrian shopping streets, including **Independencia**, **Obispo Trejo**, **and Dean Fulnes**, start at the Plaza. Just as in Buenos Aires, an equestrian statue of San Martín presides over the activity, and the **Madres de la Plaza de Mayo** congregate here every Thursday as they have done since the 1970s in their vigil to the memory of their sons and daughters who disappeared under the repressive regime of President Videla. Flowers and palm trees grace the plaza, while the omnipresent pigeons wait to be fed. Friends, old and new, gather here daily, often becoming temporary adversaries as they dispute the key issues of the day. Shoe shine boys and street performers alike ply their trade. Day and night, crowds gather around street performers and will often join in without the slightest hesitation. If you can find a spot, take the time to sit on one of the plaza's many benches and take it all in. Better yet, take a break at one of the sidewalk tables under the awnings of the **Confitería**

The Aerolíneas Argentinas office is on the plaza along with a couple of our recommended cafés.

Consider stopping here for a coffee or something cool to drink.

Sorocabana before continuing. This is Argentina, and indeed Latin America, at its best.

Traced in mosaics among the cobblestones of the plaza are the outlines of the **Cabildo** and the **Cathedral**. Take a few minutes to study the exterior of the cathedral, the climax of Colonial architecture in Córdoba and one of the most important vestiges of Colonial architecture in the country. Since its construction spanned a period of over two centuries, it represents a blending of several different periods, styles and trends. As is typical of churches throughout Latin America, much of its rich ornamentation is the fruit of indigenous labor. Upon careful study, you'll find indigenous images and motifs skillfully blended with Christian ones.

Although the site for the cathedral was selected in 1577, construction did not begin until 1683 and it was not consecrated until 1784. Completion finally occurred in 1914. Construction was characterized by a seemingly endless series of delays, including interruptions and collapses, which gave rise to its unique blend of both neoclassic and baroque styles. The massive, austerity of the neoclassic portico is juxtaposed by the indigenous influences in the baroque dome and steeple. The neo-baroque ornamentation of the interior and the exterior gates is as recent as the 19th century. The richness of the exterior decoration represents a blend of indigenous artistry and creole/baroque designs.

Three main naves separated by massive columns comprise the interior of the cathedral. Several small chapels are scattered along the sides. Many of the murals were sketched by Emilio Caraffa, who then directed Manuel Cardenosa and Augusto Orlandi in enlarging them. The original baroque altar was moved to the Iglesia de Tulumba in the 19th century and replaced by the silver altar in place today. Take some time to wander through the cathedral before moving on to our next stop, the Cabildo.

The main tourist office is in the Cabildo where you can get information about the city of Córdoba as well as the province.

Presently undergoing restoration, the simple classic lines of the **Cabildo** contrast sharply with the rich ornamentation of the cathedral. One of the few remaining *cabildos* in the country, it was the center of all civil activity during the colonial period. From its balconies authorities presided over bullfights, executions, public meetings and other events. Its 15 archways, graced by lovely colonial lanterns, once served as a provincial market place. Construction of the imposing, yet simple geometric structure was begun in 1607 and completed in 1785 by the engineer Juan Manuel López under the government of the Marquis of Sobremonte. A clock tower was added towards the end of that century. There is a small museum inside the Cabildo, which is open from 9:30 am to noon and from 4 to 8 pm. The provincial tourist office is located here, along with the headquarters of the provincial police.

Walk across the plaza to the northeastern corner. At Rosario Santa Fe 39 you'll find the

Capilla y Oratorio del Obispo Mercadillo. Especially noteworthy is its elegant facade and the singular design of the wrought iron balcony, both of which contrast sharply with the imposing size of the cathedral across the plaza. This former chapel is all that remains of the large 18th-century home that was once the residence of the Bishop Mercadillo. The seat of the Bishop of Tucumán was transferred here in 1698. Today it is home to the municipal tourist and information office. Stop in for a current listing of exhibitions and performances.

Continue east on Rosario de Santa Fe. At the corner of Alvear you'll come upon one of the most beautiful colonial homes in the city, the **Casa del Virrey Sobremonte**. Built during the mid-18th century, it was the home of the Marquis of Sobremonte, Viceroy of the Río de La Plata during the period of English invasions at the beginning of the 19th century. Today it serves as the **Museo Histórico Provincial**, the Provincial History Museum and contains a fine collection of important documents, historical artifacts including tools used by the Indians and the *gauchos*, musical instruments and ceramics from throughout the history of the province of Córdoba. Well worth a visit, the museum is open Tuesday through Friday from 9 am to 1 pm and from 3 to 8 pm. Tuesday through Sunday.

North one block on Alvear you'll come to 25 de Mayo, a lovely pedestrian promenade. In 1826 another of the city's most captivating colonial

churches, **La Merced Basílica** was built on the block bordered by Alvear and Rivadavia on the ruins of a church from 1600. On the wall bordering Rivadavia, a series of ceramics designed by Armando Cica relates the history of Córdoba. Especially noteworthy is the polychrome gold pulpit and the colorfulness of its intricate carvings.

Adopt the leisurely pace of the *cordobeses* as you stroll under the leafy canopy on 25 de Mayo, which becomes **Avenida 9 de Julio**. That official-looking building one block off the promenade on Dean Fulnes and Riviera Indarte is the **Legislatura**, the Legislative Palace. It was built in two phases, in 1885 and 1918, and was recently remodeled by Juan Kronfus, the architect responsible for much of the restorative effort currently underway in the city. The clock tower is its most striking feature. During colonial times this location served as the seat of the municipal government until it was taken over by the province for the legislature. The provincial congress meets here regularly.

*** Tip**

If you have the time and congress is in session, you can request permission at the entrance to sit in.

Turn down **Avenida General Paz**, the extension of Sársfield. The elegant French Art Nouveau home at 33 is the **Museo Municipal de**

Bellas Artes General Paz. It was built in 1910 to serve as the seat of city government and became the city's Museum of Fine Arts in 1943. Works by local artists, primarily contemporary, are exhibited there as well as at the Emilio Caraffa Museum of Fine Arts in Sarmiento Park. The museum is open Monday through Saturday from 9:30 am to 1:30 pm and from 4:30 to 8:30 pm.

Head west on Dean Funes to the **Basílica de Santo Domingo**, home of the venerated image of *Nuestra Señora del Rosario* (Virgin of Rosario), who was canonized in 1592 along with *Nuestro Señor de Milagro*s (Our Lord of Miracles), kept in Salta. Alongside the altar in the Virgin's chambers are a pair of English flags captured during the invasions of 1806, along with General Linier's staff. In front of the altar is a beautiful silver *frontal* from the colonial period.

Turn south onto Jujuy to the **Paseo Sobremonte**, one of the city's most traditional promenades. During the late 18th century this was designated as the site of the city's water supply. A large reservoir was constructed and surrounded by orchards. As the city grew during the 20th century, the reservoir became insufficent to meet its needs and was replaced during the 1960s by the fountain that you see today. Many of the original trees still remain. The Palace of Justice and Municipal Palace are located here on the **Plaza de la Intendencia**, along with an impressive monument, *Héroes de*

"Intendencia" means administration.

las Malvinas, dedicated in 1983 to those fallen in the Falklands/Malvinas War. Try to stroll through the plaza during the evening. The lighting creates a singular effect. From here follow **La Cañada** back to the Plaza Vélez Sársfield, where we started the walk.

Other Sights

Recognizing that its residents lacked wide open spaces for fresh air and recreation, in 1911 the city fathers commissioned architect Carlos Thays to design **Parque Sarmiento** (Sarmiento Park) in the southeast corner of the city. Today residents enjoy a wide range of activities here including boating at the **Isla Crisol**, tennis, skating, horseback riding, working out at the cardiovascular circuit in the **Parque de la Salud**, and outdoor performances at the **Teatro Griego**. The park also boasts an amusement park, as well as a small zoo, inaugurated in 1914, which has a special section just for snakes, with a research center devoted to the study of venom for medical purposes. For a spectacular view of the city, climb to the top of the **Coniferal**, a lookout tower within the park.

Not far from the park at the intersection of Paraná and San Lorenzo is the **Casa Giratoria**, the Rotating House. Completed in 1951, it was designed by Abdón Sahade, a Syrian immigrant, who built it from common everyday materials. It is supported by pillars and propelled by two electric motors. A grand-

son of the designer lives there now and will often open his door to visitors.

Banco Social de Córdoba, 27 de Abril and Avenida Vélez Sársfield. The Banco Social Building is one of the city's most noteworthy examples of early 20th-century French Art Nouveau architecture. Designed by the Architect Jaime Rocca, it was completed in 1929. Enter the building through a majestic arched entranceway on the corner which, like the cupola, is decorated in silver relief.

Banco Provincial de la Provincia de Córdoba, Calle San Jerónimo at the corner of Ituzaingó. Seventeen years after the Banco Provincial was opened and in response to the great prosperity enjoyed by the province during the second half of the 19th century, this majestic neoclassic-style edifice was built. Its grandeur is a clear reflection of the prosperity of the period. The bank's interior is richly decorated in wood, bronze and marble. Exhibits are occasionally held in the foyer.

La Casa Ordoñez, 27 de Abril, 375. This is one of the city's few remaining colonial houses with a central patio. Built between 1884 and 1889, the balanced design offers an interesting contrast to the ornate rococo interior. Now a library, the building formerly served as the seat of the Court as well as the House of Government.

Museo de Bellas Artes Emilio Caraffa (Provincial Fine Arts Museum), Plaza España at

the entrance to Sarmiento Park. Since first opening its doors on December 5, 1914, the Emilio Caraffa Museum has valiantly supported Argentine artists. Indeed, it is home to a fine collection of works from the second half of the last century which had been collected by the provincial government. It has since added a collection of engravings by Pablo Picasso as well as works by modern Argentine artists in several different media, and actively supports the arts with a strong educational program as well as film screenings and receptions.

An Excursion: Camino De La Punilla

The provincial tourist office suggests several different circuits to acquaint you with the landscape and history of the province of Córdoba. Because it offers the best tourist facilities and is the most accesible from Córdoba, we've selected the Camino de la Punilla. This route will take you north of Córdoba through several small resort villages and towns in the valley known as *La Punilla* because its landscape closely resembles the windswept prairies of the tablelands and plateaus of the upper Andes, known as "puna." La Punilla is a lovely region of brooks, streams, rivers and lakes that offers visitors a myriad of watersports and hiking opportunities. Try to set aside a few days for this tour to take advantage of them.

✻ Tip

If you're traveling during the summer months, keep your swim suit handy as there will be plenty of opportunities for a quick dip along the way.

Be sure to bring plenty of sun protection as the sun can be quite strong at these altitudes.

There are several small resorts throughout the region that offer swimming in natural pools. Another good idea is to pack a lunch and other refreshments for impromptu picnics en route. You will be gradually climbing higher into the mountains throughout the trip.

Since you will be returning via the same route, you should plan on making some of the stops as you head north and save others for the return trip. By keeping stops short you can complete this circuit in a day, but it will be much more enjoyable if you stretch it out over several days to get a real feel for the province. We've included several hotels along the way. Although reservations may not always be necessary, you should plan on reserving ahead during the summer months, December through March, and Easter Week.

Check the train schedule and ticket prices before making definite plans

Although a car is best, you can also travel this route by train. Seven days a week, the **Tren de Las Sierras** departs from Cordoba's Rodriguez del Busto station (☎ 482-2252), not far from the airport at the corner of Rodriguez del Busto and Manuel Cardeñoza. It heads north to Cruz del Eje, stopping at all destinations described below. The cost of a round-trip ticket for the five-hour trip is approximately $20. Boarding

time is 9 am. The return train to Córdoba departs Cruz del Eje at 2:40 pm and Capilla del Monte at 3:15, and arrives in Córdoba at 6:30 pm.

Carlos Paz & El Lago San Roque

Following Route 20 out of Córdoba, your first stop will be Carlos Paz on the banks of Lago San Roque. You may already be familiar with this popular resort town 35 kilometers (22 miles) outside the city, since several of our recommended nightspots and restaurants are located here.

★ Did You Know?

This is one of Argentina's favorite resort cities. During the summer months its population swells from 40,000 to nearly 400,000.

In addition to fine hotels and resorts, the city boasts lovely summer homes and chalets. One of the most interesting is the **Casa de Casper**, perched on a ravine at the intersection of Miguel Cane and El Redentor.

The lake, of course, is the primary attraction. Visitors enjoy a multitude of watersports, including sailing, motor boating, waterskiing, and windsurfing, as well as fishing. The concierge at your hotel should be able to help you participate through one of the local nautical clubs, **Club 400** or the **Jockey Club.** Horse-

back riding and hiking are also popular pastimes.

Surprisingly, San Roque is an artificial lake which came into being with the completion of the San Roque Dam across the Rio Suquía in 1890. At that time it was the largest dam of its kind in the world. A modern dam was built in 1944. However, much of the original dam still remains.

The Teleférico has been in operation since 1955.

For a fantastic view of the area, take the chairlift, **Teleférico Autosilla** from Avenidas San Martín, General Paz, Cárcano or Estrada to the top of the hill opposite Cerro La Cruz. There are telescopes at the top for an even better view. The chairlift operates from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm and from 2:30 to 7:30 pm. A round-trip ticket is $10 and includes museum admission. Those who are athletically inclined may opt to hike the 2,200 meters (7,200 feet) to the top of Cerro La Cruz, so named for the 15-meter-high (49 feet) cross at its peak.

Other attractions in Carlos Paz include **Golden City**, a reproduction of a town in the old west complete with bank robberies, duels, and drinking at the local saloon (swinging doors and all) at the intersection of Route 20 with Gobernador Alvárez; and **Magic Mountain**, an amusement park featuring a rollercoaster.

Since it is one of Argentina's most popular vacation destinations, Carlos Paz boasts some really fine hotels. The four-star **Portal Del Lago Hotel** (☎/fax 351-424-931 or in Buenos Aires:

Florida 520, local 48, ☎/fax 4327-0693; e-mail portal@hotelnet.com.ar) on the shores of Lago San Roque is the most luxurious and also the most expensive. Facilities include tennis and paddleball courts, outdoor and indoor swimming pools, a spacious sun deck, sauna, art gallery, restaurant and *confitería*. Downtown accommodations can be had at the **Hotel Libertador** (☎ 351-423-330), also a four-star. It has an open rooftop area, though little else for recreational activities. The three-star **Las Lajas** (☎/fax 0541-22-339) is especially popular with families. Extras include both indoor and outdoor pools, a small playground for the kids and a game room with pool tables.

Restaurants are plentiful and most are on Avenida San Martín. Of course, *parrillas* and Italian restaurants are among the most popular. For a typical *parrillada*, try **Parrilla Tauro**, **El Rancho Pora**, **Las Farolas** on Avenida San Martín or **Angus** on Avenida Libertad. **La Mama**, next door to the casino, and **La Casona** both specialize in pasta. For a more varied menu, try **Restaurant Barras,** where you'll also have your choice of indoor or outdoor dining, or **La Posta** for fresh seafood.

La Calera

Rather than take Route 20, you may want to pass through the suburb of La Calera, 18 kilometers (11 miles) outside Córdoba en route to Carlos Paz. Highlights include the **Capilla Vieja**, an 18th-century Jesuit chapel whose

most noteworthy feature is its delicately carved altar and the **Molino Viejo**, a water-driven mill from the same time period, used by the Jesuits to grind grain. You can reach La Calera via Avenida Colón, which later becomes Avenida Ejército Argentino. After stopping in La Calera, continue along this road until you reach the San Roque Dam and then drive south along the shore of the lake until you reach Carlos Paz.

Tanti

Time permitting, you may want to take a slight detour to the summer village of **Tanti**, 15 kilometers (nine miles) northwest of Carlos Paz on Route 20. The Comechigon Indians were the original inhabitants of Tanti which, in their language, means "stone site." Indeed, one of the attractions here is a series of unusual rock formations called the **Cueva de los Pajaritos**, just eight kilometers (five miles) away. The Yuspe River, the Los Chorrillos Brook and the Tanti Stream all run through Tanti and the **Los Chorrillos Waterfall** is seven kilometers (4.3 miles) away. There is a campground at the falls. In-town sights include the **Cueva de la Virgen de la Medalla Milagrosa** and the Parish Church **Nuestra Señora del Rosario.**

Bialet Masse

From Carlos Paz, take Route 38 north to the village of Bialet Masse, located just beyond the north shore of the lake. This village was named

for Juan Bialet Masse who, in 1884, built **El Horno de "La Primera Argentina"** – the furnace which was used to fire the limestone used in the construction of the original dam on Lago San Roque. In addition to the furnace, you can also visit the **Iglesia de San Plácido**. Fruit of a concerted effort by Argentine, Brazilian and Italian architects, this lovely church is set in a beautiful hillside in the **El Balcón** district. River resorts dot the area.

Cosquín

From Bialet Masse continue on to the quaint village of Cosquín, which served as a post on the road to Peru during colonial times and today hosts Latin America's largest **folk festival** for two weeks every January, earning it the title of Folklore Capital of Argentina. The festival takes place in the **Plaza Próspero Molina,** the main square also known as the Plaza Nacional del Folclor.

Shaded by willows, Cosquín is nestled between the Cosquín River and Cerro (Hill) Pan de Azúcar. The scenery here is especially lovely and is best viewed by taking the chairlift 1,260 meters (4,133 feet) up to the top of Pan de Azúcar, originally called *Supag Ñuñu* (Virgin's Bosom) by the Indians who inhabited the region.

For the intrepid, paragliding is offered at the top of the hill.

Other attractions include the **Iglesia Nuestra Señora del Rosario**, a church dating back to the last century with a baptism pillar built by the local Indians and an 18th-century altar-

piece; the **Artisan's Museum** at 1031 Tucumán; the **Camin Cosquín Culture and Recreation Center** which includes an archaeology museum, waterslide and mountain bike track; and the **Quebrada Los Leones**, a gorge accented by lush forests, centuries-old ferns and rushing springs.

For an overnight stay, consider the three-star **Hotel La Puerta del Sol** (☎/fax 0541/451-626) or the **Paraisso Hotel & Spa** (☎/fax 0541/452-120).

Valle Hermoso & La Falda

Your next major stop is the lovely village of La Falda. At the beginning of the century, this was a favorite retreat of Buenos Aires' and Córdoba's most wealthy residents. Its popularity has not diminished in the least. You'll find a wide range of accommodations, including camping, should you decide to spend a day or two. The **Gran Hotel Tomaso Di Savoia** (☎ 0548/423-013) and the **Nor Tomarza** (☎ 0548/423-036), both on Avenida Eden (the principal throughfare), are two very lovely four-star hotels.

✻ Tip

Among La Falda's most outstanding features are the eucalyptus trees, brought here from Australia over a century ago by then-President Domingo Faustino Sarmiento.

A festival celebrating the folk music of Argentina's many immigrants and the tango is held in the municipal amphitheater here every February.

There is plenty to do here, including golfing, swimming, hiking, horseback riding, fishing, sailing and sightseeing. Attractions include the **Capilla Santa Bárbara**, a 1747 chapel noteworthy for its image of Santa Bárbara, dagger in hand; the **La Falda Dam and Lake**; panoramic views from **La Banderita** and **El Cuadrado** hills; the **Gruta** (grotto) **San Antonio**, rumored to contain hidden Jesuit treasures; and **Olsen**, formerly a Comechingon and Sanaviron Indian settlement, today the site of lime and marble quarries, and of **La Cascada**, a natural resort.

Before reaching La Falda, you'll pass the village of **Valle Hermoso**. Its **San Antonio Chapel** was built between 1714 and 1735 and restored quite recently. The statue of Christ in the interior is from the Cuzco School. Seven kilometers (4.3 miles) outside Valle Hermoso is **Cascada los Helechos**, site of a lively waterfall and a popular starting point for mountaineering trips.

La Cumbre

Continuing north on Route 38 towards La Cumbre, you'll pass through **Huerta Grande** and **Villa Giardino.** Huerta Grande is remarkable for the numerous brooks and streams which run through its center. Popular

with tourists and vacationers, it has fine beaches, campsites, hotels and attractive summer homes. Villa Giardino, three kilometers (1.9 miles) north, is equally lovely. Just as both names suggest, the landscape here is green and lush with plenty of pine trees, flowers and cows and horses grazing in open fields.

At 1,142 meters (3,768 feet) above sea level, **La Cumbre**, is another very popular mountain retreat as well as home to writers and artists. Its 18-hole golf course, set against a backdrop of rolling green mountains covered with pine trees, is the finest in the country. **Trout fishing** from November through April in the **Tiu Mayu River**, 11 kilometers (5.6 miles) outside town, and **paragliding** off the **Cuchi Corral Watchtower** into the 400-meter-deep (1,300 feet) **Valle de los Pintos** are other popular pastimes, as are tennis and swimming. A statue of Christ the Redeemer **(Cristo Redentor)** atop the highest hill of the region watches over the town, which is also a favorite destination of Holy Week Pilgrimages. If you'd like to spend a night or two here, consider renting a cabin, complete with wood-burning fireplace) at **Cabañas del Golf** (☎/fax 0548/452-008) just 100 meters (328 feet) from the golf course. The chalet-style **Gran Hotel La Cumbre** (☎ 0548/451-550) is also a lovely choice.

Los Cocos

At 1,220 meters (4,000 feet) above sea level, Los Cocos is one of the highest points in the area and boasts a near perfect climate. Unlike the rest of the region, however, it has very few rivers or streams. Not to worry, most homes and hotels do have swimming pools. A breath-taking view of the region can be had nearly 365 days a year from atop the **Cerro El Camello** (Camel Hill).

Capilla del Monte

Our final destination is Capilla del Monte, 106 kilometers/66 miles from Córdoba and the northernmost city in the Punilla Valley. While the area is dotted with palm trees, it is interesting to note that the peak of **Cerro Uritorco**, which towers over the city and is the highest in the Sierra Chica (1,950 meters/6,400 feet), is occasionally covered with snow during the winter months. However, Capilla del Monte enjoys an ideal climate, with one of the highest percentages of sunny days in all of Argentina.

Nature enthusiasts will want to explore the surrounding countryside. Three kilometers (1.8 miles) outside town is **Los Mogotes**, an area of small waterfalls formed by a tributary of the Dolores River as it passes through a narrow ravine. **The Paso del Indio**, a narrow path, winds its way through the area and is great for hiking. Equally lovely is **Huertas Malas**, an area whose only sounds are running water and birds singing. It is reached via a footpath run-

ning alongside a creek. Interesting masses of volcanic stone can be studied at **Los Terrones**, located beyond the Uritorco Valley 14 kilometers (8.7 miles) from town. Botanists will find **Los Paredones**, eight kilometers (five miles) from Capilla del Monte, especially interesting. Ferns dominate the flora here, along with the **clavel del aire**, an unusual carnation-like plant that is actually a species of aerial plant. And finally, there is the **La Toma River Resort**, an area of cristaline ponds and waterfalls four kilometers (2.5 miles) from town. **Aguas Blancas** nearby features mineral springs and campsites.

Córdoba After Dark

Córdoba enjoys a very active cultural life, with frequent performances by nationally and internationally acclaimed artists, dance troops and theater groups at the Teatro San Martín and the many small theaters and cultural centers in town. For listings of these as well as to find out what's playing at one of Córdoba's many movie theaters, check *La Voz del Interior,* the daily paper.

Apart from cafés, hotel lounges and a few scattered bars, downtown Córdoba does not offer much in the way of nightlife. But this is rapidly changing, as many new pubs and restaurants are beginning to open along Bulevar Chacabuco and the Plaza Vélez Sársfield. For discos, nightclubs and casinos (there's one in Carlos Paz), you'll have to grab a cab or hop in your car and

head to **Cerro de las Rosas**, an affluent residential zone with lots of fine restaurants and bistros by the Château Carreras stadium, or **Carlos Paz**.

Discos

FLY CITY
Hipolito Irigoyen 282 (corner of Independencia)

One of the few clubs downtown, Fly City can get crowded, especially during the weekend. Inside it is quite pretty, with large white columns and a black and white motif. There's a sunken dance floor in the center with plenty of couches and secluded nooks, and a large bar for socializing.

SKY
Hipolito Irigoyen 150
10 pm to 5 am
Closed Sunday

Sky is another popular in-town choice. Spread out over two levels, it has two two large dance floors.

FACTORY
Avenida Rafael Nuñez 3960
Cerro de las Rosas
☎ *816-301*
Open 12:30 am-5 am

This large disco is housed, obviously, in what was once a factory. For a complete evening, have a late dinner or cocktails next door at **Navajo**. Also in a former factory, this lovely

Factory is 15 minutes outside the city by car.

parrilla features North American Indian decor in a theater-type setting.

You'll need a cab or car to get to either of these as they are not downtown.

Although a little out of the way, **Pizza Banana** (☎ 484-0444) and **Cocowalk** on Avenida Carcano (☎ 484-7243) are worth investigating. Both offer dinner and dancing. Pizza Banana also offers a live show. The cover charge is $13 without dinner.

Bars & Pubs

THE ROCK & FELLER'S BAR
Av. Hipólito Yrigoyen 320
Av. Rafael Núñez 4791
Cerro de las Rosas

The Golden Bear, next door to the Córdoba Park Hotel, is similar to Rock & Fellers both in its menu and the ambience. It is nearly as popular too.

Rock & Feller's, a local franchise, reminds us of a cross between T.G.I. Friday's and the Hard Rock Café. There's loud music, rock & roll paraphanalia as decor (emphasis on the Beatles) and videos. Live entertainment is often featured on Friday and Saturday nights when the doors stay open till 5 am. The kitchen is open all day long and the menu is similar to T.G.I Fridays and the Hard Rock.

BRITISH PUB PICCADILLY
Av. Hipólito Irigoyen 464
Closed Sunday; open till 3 am; 4 am on Saturday.

Great for singles and couples alike.

Piccadilly is a theme restaurant similar to Rock & Fellers but on a much smaller scale and more in keeping with a traditional British pub. Darts have replaced the rock paraphanalia.

Discos in Carlos Paz

Carlos Paz, a small resort town 30 minutes outside Córdoba by car, boasts a couple fun nightspots of its own. If you are going out with a group and can share the cost of a cab ($30 one way), a night out in Carlos Paz is worth the trouble and expense. You can spend some time in the casino and then go dancing.

Remember, most discos don't open until 10 or 11 pm.

KEOPS DISCO
Carlos Paz

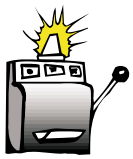
Keops is the large tent-like structure right at the entrance to Carlos Paz. It can hold up to 1,500 people and often does.

DISCO MOLINO ROJO
Carlos Paz

Thirty minutes by car.

Given the way nightclubs come and go, El Molino Rojo is definitely an anomaly. It's been open for over 30 years. Although the music has changed over the years, little else has. You'll recognize it by the large red mill in front.

A Casino



The finest casino in the area is the **Casino Carlos Paz** on Avenida San Martín in Carlos Paz. It is open from 2 pm to 5 am seven days a week and there is a $4 admission charge. Tables include roulette, black jack, *punta y banco,* seven fax, monte and Hazzard. The average minimum bet is $10 and the maximum is $100.

The casino also has a bingo salon.

Shop Till You Drop

Window shoppers will find Córdoba close to "heaven on earth" as they stroll along **9 de Julio, Independencia**, **Riviera Indarte** and other pedestrian-only streets and arcades, past the beautifully dressed windows of the city's finest shops. **9 de Julio** reminds us very much of Calle Florida in Buenos Aires. It is far smaller and charming, with shade provided by a leafy canopy as you cross Independencia.

Artecasa, just off the Plaza San Martín on Independencia, features works by soon-to-be discovered as well as fairly well known Córdoba artists. They will gladly design a custom frame for anything you select. **Grimoldi Shoes** and **Angelo Paolo Leather** have shops on 9 de Julio, as does **Ted Lapidus**. You'll recognize these names from Buenos Aires. **Christian Dior** has a shop on Riviera Indarte.

You'll find many other fine shops in the area, several of which are located in the **Via Nueva** arcade, which stretches between Tucumán and 9 de Julio.

Shopping centers are open until at least 9 pm during the week (restaurants until midnight) and later during the weekend.

Of course, the shopping mall is not unknown here. **Garden Shopping**, centrally located at the corner of Ituzaingo and Corrientes, and **Nuevo Centro Shopping**, across from the Sheraton Hotel at Avenida Duarte Quiros 1400, house a wide range of fine shops, including the Falabella department store as well as designer boutiques (both clothing and housewares), record shops, book stores and cafés. Córdoba's

newest and largest shopping center, **Patio Olmos**, near the Córdoba Plaza Hotel on Avenida Vélez Sársfield, is on par with the Alto Palermo and Patio Bullrich shopping centers in Buenos Aires.

Your best option for **handicrafts** and t*ípicos* such as *mates* and *bombillas* (the gourds and silver straws used to drink *mate*), ponchos, silver and leather items is the large **artisan fair** which is held every day until 8 pm on the Plaza Italia. Also known as the **Paseo de las Artes**, it is on the Cañada, south of the Plaza Vélez Sársfield, at the intersection of Marcelo T. de Alvear and Achaval Rodriguez. Shops selling regional crafts are located throughout the colonial section.

Be sure to shop around as prices and quality vary.

Córdoba A-Z

AIRLINE OFFICES: The **Aerolíneas Argentinas** Office is at Colón 520. For information ☎ 426-7676.

Dinar is next door at Colón 523 (☎ 426-2020) and **Lapa** is at Av. Figueroa Alacorta 181 (☎ 426-3336).

BOOKSTORE: Bibliophiles should stop in at **El Mundo del Libro** at the corner of Dean Funes and Obispo Trejo.

BUS STATION: The bus station is on Bulevard Presidente J.D. Perón, 300.

CAR RENTAL: Avis has an office at Corrientes 452 (☎ 351-426-1110) as well as a

booth in the airport (☎ 351-481-6473). **Dollar** is on Avenida Chacabuco at 163/185 (☎ 351-424-4923). There are several agencies at the airport as well.

DAILY NEWSPAPER: ***La Voz del Interior*** is Córdoba's daily newspaper. ***The Buenos Aires Herald*** and ***The International Herald Tribune*** are available on the second floor of the Patio Olmos Shopping Center.

FUTBOL: Córdoba was one of the host cities to the 1978 World Cup and built the **Chateau Carreras Stadium** especially for the occasion. With a capacity of 45,000, concerts and music festivals are held here as well as soccer matches. The stadium is 10 kilometers (six miles) outside the city on the banks of the Suquía River.

MEDICAL EMERGENCY: In case of a medical emergency, contact the **Centro de Especialidades Médicas o Asistencia Pública**, Sarmiento 450.

TELEPHONE DIAL CODE: 351 (see page 14).

TOURIST OFFICE: Branches of the Tourist Office are located in the Cabildo (☎ 424-5758), at the bus station (☎ 423-4169) and at the airport (☎ 481-1241). The Tourist Office asl has a website (www.cordoba.gob.ar) and you can contact it by e-mail at munturis@cordoba.gob.ar.

TAXI SERVICE: To call for a cab, try **Tele Taxis** at ☎ 473-4444. For a cab to the airport, contact **Remis** at 420-5140.

TRAIN STATION: The **Bartolomé Mitre** Train Station is at Bulevard J.D. Perón 101.

TRAVEL AGENT: If you need to make travel arrangements or to modify your plans, the agents at **Passerini Viajes S.R.L** at Obispo Trejo 357 are very helpful. The concierge at your hotel will usually handle similar arrangements, as well as arrange for tickets to the theater and other events, reconfirm flights and make dinner reservations.

Mendoza

"Bienvenido a Mendoza. La Tierra del Vino"
(Welcome to Mendoza. The Land of Wine)

This is the greeting you'll receive upon your arrival in Mendoza. Yet wine is just one among the many pleasures you'll enjoy here.

If we were asked to name the city best described by the word "resilient," Mendoza would have to be it. Devastated by a major earthquake in 1861, the city was reincarnated as a verdant garden in the midst of a desert plain. If you were dropped in the middle of this city of nearly 130,000 residents, surrounded by orchards and vineyards and lush with parks and plazas, you would never imagine that you were in the most arid region of Argentina, the Cuyo.

Following the example set by their Indian predecessors, Mendoza's residents know how to make the most of their limited water supply. Just as dams have been built across many of the rivers outside the city to provide water for the orchards and vineyards, irrigation channels or *acequias,* often shaded by groves of sycamores, run alongside the streets of the city. Mingling what little rainfall there is with water running down from the Andes, they provide the city with much of its water. Despite the scarcity of water – or perhaps because of it – Mendoza is also an exceptionally clean city. Electric trolley buses replace much of the exhaust fumes and

noise common to other South American cities, making it all the more delightful.

Just like the wines the province is famous for, Mendoza is a city to be savored. Not monumental in proportion, nor overwhelmingly historic, you can use Mendoza as home base for trips into the countryside and nearby ski resorts or simply enjoy the city on its own terms.

History

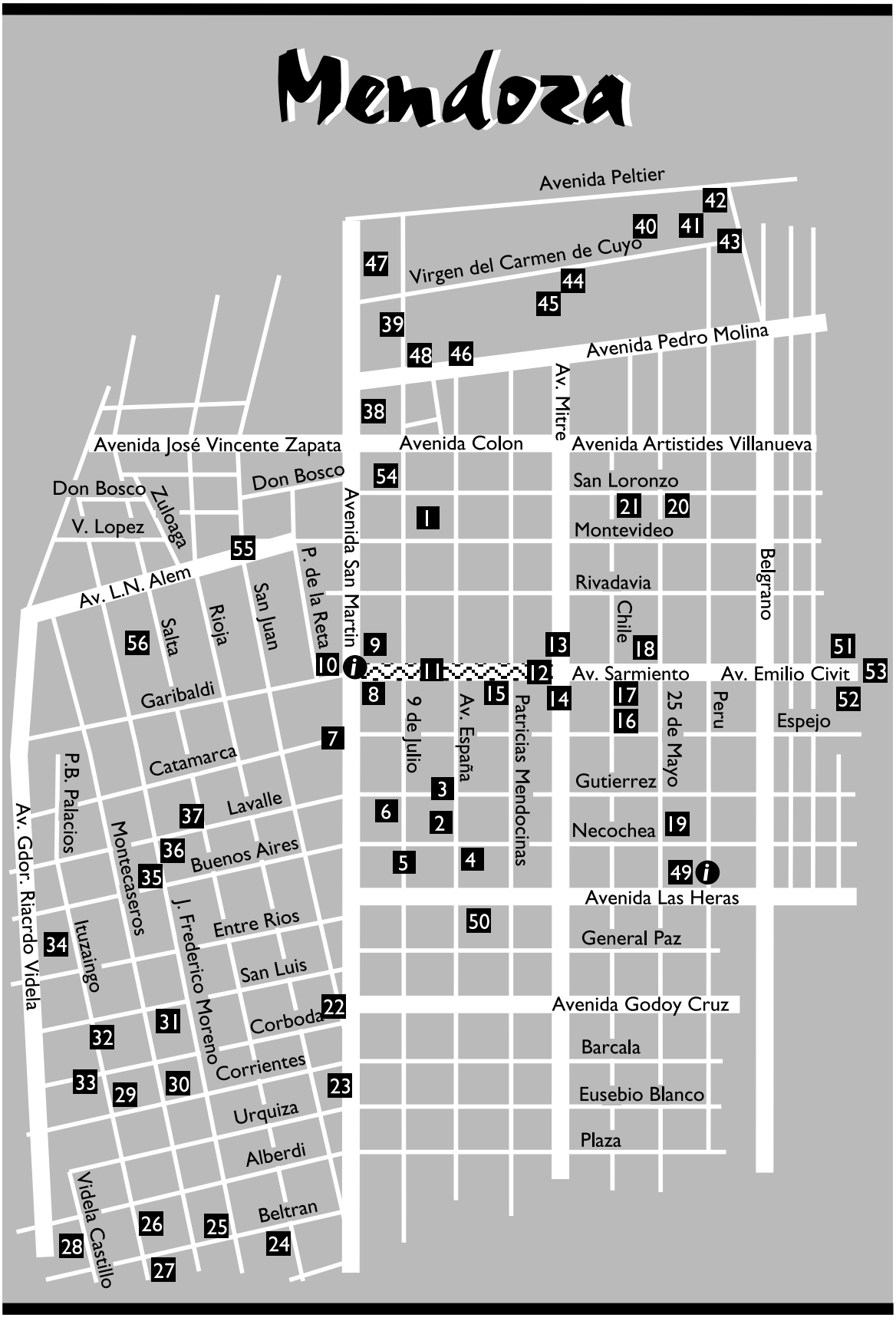
As part of a campaign to create a line of settlements linking Buenos Aires on the Atlantic with Santiago de Chile on the Pacific, **Don Pedro del Castillo** crossed into Argentina from Chile and founded the city of Mendoza on March 2, 1561, naming it for the then-governor of Chile, Don Garcia Hurtado de Mendoza. For reasons unknown, shortly thereafter the city was moved to another location, only to be refounded in 1562 by **Don Juan Jufré**, who would christen her "La Resurrección." Chile would rule the region until the formation of the Viceroyalty of the Rio de la Plata in 1776.

The first 250 years of Mendoza's history were fairly uneventful. Most settlers were from Chile, and trade with that country was key to the region's economic development. Mendoza's location just west of the **Uspallata Pass** (or the **Camino de los Andes** as it is more commonly called), through which all trade with Chile passed, made the city a natural link for commerce between the neighboring countries. Modifying and improving the irrigation methods

developed by the Huarpe Indians, they planted grain, vineyards and orchards to give rise to Mendoza's agricultural economy. Silver, copper and lead mining were also pursued, but without success.

Despite its great promise, Mendoza's, and indeed the entire Cuyo region's, economy went into decline during the first half of the 19th century. Once Argentina declared independence, trade with Chile weakened. Formerly allies, the two countries were competitors. Buenos Aires became Argentina's administrative and commercial center. Unfortunately, the high cost and high risks associated with ox cart freight, the only means of transportation available at the time, limited the potential for trade between Mendoza and Buenos Aires. The wine industry suffered with the introduction of lower-priced imports from France, Spain and Italy. Wealth expected from mining never came into being. Fortunately, Mendoza's economy would spring back to life in 1884 with the introduction of the railroad.

The crowning event in Mendoza's history came during the **War of Independence** from Spain, the event commemorated by the Cerro de la Gloria in the Parque San Martín. In 1816 General José de San Martín, who at that time was also the Governor of the Cuyo, based his army, the Ejército de los Andes, in Mendoza. He had formed the army the previous year as part of the war effort. The infantry was comprised primarily of blacks, whose liberty had been pur-


Mendoza
Avenida Peltier
Virgen del Carmen de Cuyo
Avenida Pedro Molina
Avenida José Vincente Zapata
Avenida Colon
Av. Mitre
Avenida Artistides Villanueva
Don Bosco
Zuloaga
V. Lopez
Av. L.N. Alem
Salta
Rioja
San Juan
P. de la Reta
Avenida San Martin
San Loronzo
Montevideo
Rivadavia
Chile
Belgrano
Garibaldi
Av. Sarmiento
Av. Emilio Civit
9 de Julio
Av. España
Patricias Mendocinas
25 de Mayo
Peru
Espejo
Catamarca
Gutierrez
P.B. Palacios
Lavalle
Buenos Aires
Necochea
Montecaseros
Entre Rios
Avenida Las Heras
Av. Gdor. Riacrdo Videla
Iruzaingo
J. Frederico Moreno
San Luis
General Paz
Corboda
Avenida Godoy Cruz
Corrientes
Barcala
Urquiza
Eusebio Blanco
Alberdi
Plaza
Videla Castillo
Beltran

MICROCENTRO

1. Plaza España
2. Plaza San Martín
3. Banco Hipotecario Nacional
4. Basilica de San Francisco
5. Banco de Mendoza
6. Banco de Mendoza
7. Subsecretaria de Turismo
8. Pasaje San Martín
9. Edificio Gómez
10. Diario Los Andes
11. Paseo Peatonal Sarmiento

CIUDAD NUEVA

12. Plaza Independencia
13. Museo Municipal de Arte Moderno
14. Teatro Municipal Julio Quintanilla
15. Legislatura Provincial
16. Teatro Independencia
17. Plaza Hotel
18. Colegio Nacional Agustín Alvarez M.H.N.
19. Plaza Chile
20. Plaza Italia
21. Museo del Pasado Cuyano

CIUDAD VIEJA

22. Alameda
23. Biblioteca y Museo Sanmartiniano
24. Iglesia de Santo Domingo
25. Monumento a Anibal Troilo
26. Plaza Pedro de Castillo
27. Ruinas de San Francisco
28. Museo del Area Fundacional
29. Solar de la Maestranza del Ejército
30. Solar de la Casa de San Martín
31. Iglesia de la Merced
32. Parque O'Higgins
33. Teatro Municipal Gabriela Mistral
34. Acuario Municipal
35. Plaza Sarmiento
36. Catedral de Mendoza
37. Escuela de Música (Ex Casa Bombal)

BARRIO CIVICO

38. Edificio Correos
39. Municipalidad de Mendoza - Terraza mirador
40. Aduana de Mendoza
41. Centro de Congresos y Exposiciones
42. Antigua bodega
43. Palacio Policial Museo "Agualcil Mayor Capitan D. Ruíz de Rojas"
44. Casa de Gobierno - Sala de Bandera
45. Poder Judicial
46. Tribunales Federales
47. Instituto Nacional de Vitivinicultura
48. Comando VIII Brigada de Infantería de Montaña
49. Museo Popular Callejero
50. Mercado Central
51. Casa López Frugoni
52. Casa Arenas
53. Portones Parque Gral. San Martín
54. Iglesia de la Compañia de Jesus
55. Plazoleta Pellegrini
56. Hospital Central

chased by the provincial government. The cavalry was predominantly *mestizo* (of mixed Spanish/Indian descent), while officers were Spanish and *criollos* (Argentine-born Spanish). They were joined by exiled Chileans led by General Bernardo O'Higgins, who had been defeated by the Spanish in 1814 at the Battle of Rancagua.

In September, 1816 San Martín met with the Pehuenche Indians at a camp 30 leagues south of Mendoza to request their permission to lead his army across their territory in order to attack the Spanish from the south. However, this was far from his real intention. In one of the most daring and best orchestrated feats in military history, San Martín led his troops (which numbered well over 4,000), heavy artillery and all, across some of the highest peaks in the Andes into Chile. Taking the Spanish by surprise, he defeated them in the **Battle of Chacabuco** in February of 1817. This smashing victory marked a change in the balance of power in the war which would culminate with the surrender of the Spanish forces in April 1818 at the Battle of Maipú, and the creation of the independent nation of Chile. San Martín would use Chile as his base of operations until 1821 when, in the last phase of the War of Independence, he drove the Spanish from Peru.

Unfortunately, even San Martín's military prowess could not safeguard the city of Mendoza against a natural disaster. At dusk on March 20, 1861, Holy Thursday, a major earth-

quake shook the city, devastating it. Of Mendoza's 12,000 residents, 4,000 perished. The rest of Argentina was joined by Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, England and France in an international effort to aid the city. To prevent the recurrence of a similar tragedy, the city was rebuilt as we know it today, with broad avenues, low buildings and plenty of parks and plazas that can serve as refuges in the event of future earthquakes. Another earthquake struck the city in 1985. There was structural damage, but no fatalities were reported.

Geography/Topography

The city of Mendoza is capital of the province of the same name, which joins the provinces of San Juan and San Luis in the central region of the Argentine Andes to form the Cuyo.

★ Did You Know?

Cuyo, which means "land of stone" in the language of the Huarpe Indians and "land of sand" in Mapuche, is the driest region of Argentina.

First discovered in 1551 by Francisco de Villagra, who came to the region from Peru, the area was actually settled by colonists from the Central Valley of Chile in the late 16th century. The Cuyo was one of the first areas of the River Plate region to be settled.

With the Andes marking its western border with Chile, the province of Mendoza is bordered

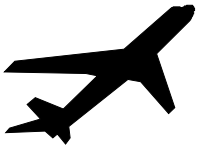
by the provinces of San Juan to the north, San Luis to the east, and La Pampa and Neuquen to the south. Mountains cover one-third of its area, with arid plains in the east and piedmont in the center comprising the remainder. Volcanoes, active and extinct, dominate much of the southern landscape. Like their counterparts, the Andes to the west, whose peaks are covered by eternal snow and ice, these mountains extend to heights of over 6,000 meters (19,680 feet). The most important peaks of the Argentine Andes are in Mendoza. These include Nevado de Juncal (6,110 meters), Pollera (6,235 meters), Iglesia (6,300 meters), Tupungato (6,800 meters) and, the mightiest of all, Aconcagua (6,959 meters).

Surprisingly, the barren and desolate Andean landscape provides the mineral-rich waters which make agriculture the primary industry in Mendoza. In late spring, the waters from melting glaciers and snows rush down shallow rock-strewn channels cut into the Andes to the **Desaguadero**, the region's principal river. It, in turn, feeds its many tributaries, one of which is the **Mendoza**, the main river in the province, until the mountain waters eventually reach the irrigation channels which serve the 2.5% of the province which is cultivated. Of Mendoza's cultivated area, 63% is dedicated to vineyards, while fruit trees – peaches, apples, plums, pears and almonds – cover much of the rest.

Climate

Mendoza is crowned by a cloudless azure sky nearly 360 days a year. Summers are hot and dry with daytime temperatures reaching well into the 90s. Nevertheless, you may need a sweater for the early morning hours and evenings when temperatures are sharply cooler. Winters are mild with temperatures normally in the 40s. Cold snowy days, though rare, are not unheard of. Rainstorms are few and far between, although thunder and hail storms are common during the summer. The little rain that does fall is collected in the irrigation channels which run throughout the city. The climate is decidedly cooler in the higher elevations where there are frequent winter snows. The **Zonda Wind**, common to areas of high temperatures and scarce humidity, frequently blows across Mendoza.

Getting There



By Plane: Aerolíneas Argentinas and **Austral** offer several flights daily to Mendoza from Buenos Aires and other cities across the country. If you're traveling to Mendoza from outside Argentina, you will probably have to catch a connecting flight in Buenos Aires.

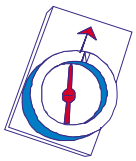
By Car: National Route 40, which bisects Argentina from north to south, passes through Mendoza. National Route 7, which starts in Buenos Aires and finishes at the Cristo

Redentor Tunnel at the border with Chile, also passes through Mendoza.

By Bus: The **Chevallier** (☎ 4314-5555, in Buenos Aires) and **Jocoli** (☎ 4311-8203, in Buenos Aires) bus lines offer service between Buenos Aires and Mendoza.

Arrival

El Plumerillo International Airport is located six miles east of the city. A **remis** cab into Mendoza will cost around $9. The Tourist Office (**Subsecretario de Turismo)** has a kiosk in the airport where you can pick up maps and tourist information. There is a branch of **Avis** in the airport as well. The **train station** is a few blocks from the Plaza Chile at the intersection of Avenida Las Heras and Belgrano. The **bus station**, Terminal del Sol, is at the intersection of Avenida Acceso Este y Costanera, six blocks east of the Plaza de España.



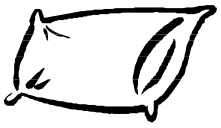
Orientation

You should be able to walk virtually anywhere you want to go within the city. Four blocks in size, the **Plaza Independencia** is the heart of Mendoza. It is surrounded by four plazas, each two blocks away: **Plaza Chile** at the northwest corner; **Plaza San Martín** at the northeast; **Plaza España** at the southeast; and **Plaza Italia** at the southwest corner. **Avenida Sarmiento**, a major thoroughfare, runs through the center of the Plaza, east to west. There is a pedestrian mall, **Paseo Sarmiento**,

east of the plaza until it intersects Avenida San Martín. West of the Plaza, Sarmiento becomes **Emilio Civit** until it reaches the entrance of the **Parque San Martín** where it undergoes another name change as Avenida Libertador.

Three blocks east of the Plaza Independencia, **Avenida San Martín**, also known as La Alameda, runs north to south and is one of the city's major commercial streets and home to many fine restaurants. The principal market place, **El Mercado Central,** and many large handicraft shops are on **Avenida Las Heras**, which runs east to west and is one block north of the Plazas Chile and San Martín. **Avenida Mitre**, another important street, bisects the Plaza Independencia north to south.

Best Places to Stay in Mendoza



You should have no problem finding a fine hotel at a reasonable price in Mendoza. There are no five-star hotels, but there is no shortage of comfort and attentive service at the three- and four-star hostelries. Often, only the high price is missing. Just as throughout Argentina, a breakfast buffet is standard. Because the city is small, most hotels are centrally located.

Alive Price Scale

Deluxe: . . $200+
Expensive: . $120+
Moderate: $60-120
Inexpensive: $35-60
Budget: under $35

HOTEL ACONCAGUA ☆☆☆☆
San Lorenzo 545
☎ *261-420-4499; fax 261-420-2083*
www.hotelaconcagua.com.ar
E-mail htlacon@satlink.com
160 rooms
Moderate

Best location.

The modern Hotel Aconcagua stands out among the buildings surrounding the Plaza Italia. Rooms here are fairly standard, yet comfortable.

> ✻ Tip
>
> Be sure to request one with a view of the Andes. If you're in your room in the late afternoon you should be able to watch the sunset over the mountains.

There is an outdoor terrace and pool on the second floor as well as a sauna. The Aconcagua also has a fine international restaurant.

PLAZA HOTEL ☆☆☆☆
Chile 1124
☎ *261-423-3000*
Fax 261-423-3000
E-mail hplaza-a@satlink.com
80 rooms
Expensive

Next to the Teatro Independencia.

Majestic best describes the neo-classic facade of the very regal Plaza Hotel, located in the heart of the city on the Plaza Independencia. You'll find old world style and comfort throughout, from the subdued elegance of the spacious lobby sitting area and formal dining room to the comfortable furnishings of the guest rooms and suites. A beautifully landscaped lawn and terrace surround the outdoor pool. The Plaza also a small beauty salon as well as a game room and a VIP lounge.

GRAN HOTEL HUENTALA ☆☆☆☆
Plaza de la Reta 1007
☎ *261-420-0766*
Fax 261-420-0664
76 rooms
Moderate

The centrally located Gran Hotel Huentala is another fine four-star choice with facilities almost comparable to those at the Aconcagua.

HOTEL CRILLON ☆☆☆
Calle Peru 1065
☎ *261-429-8494*
Fax 261-423-9658
80 rooms
Moderate

The only real differences between the Crillon and our four-star selections is its slightly lower price and lack of a pool. Otherwise, it matches them in service and comfort. Rooms are tastefully furnished and carpeted. The Crillon is located on Peru, just a block away from the Casino between Calles Sarmiento and Rivadavia.

GRAN RITZ HOTEL ☆☆☆
Calle Peru 1008
☎/*fax 261-423-5115*
38 rooms
Moderate

Not far from the Crillon, the Gran Ritz offers guests the familiar service that is best enjoyed at a small hotel. Especially lovely is the TV/sitting room with comfortable couches and plants all around.

GRAND HOTEL BALBI ☆☆☆
Avenida Las Heras 340
☎ 261-423-3500
Fax 261-438-0626
108 rooms
Moderate

Located on one of the city's busiest streets, the Grand Hotel Balbi sports an enclosed parking area as well as a pool, bar and restaurant.

HOTEL CERVANTES ☆☆☆
Amigorena 65
☎ 261-420-1782
Fax 261-420-1732
E-mail hcervant@satlink.com
70 rooms, 4 floors
Moderate

Request a room with a mountain view.

The centrally-located Cervantes is a solid three-star value. Rooms are basic yet comfortable, with standard amenities.

GRAN HOTEL PRINCESS ☆☆☆
25 de Mayo 1168
☎/fax 261-234-537
36 rooms
Moderate
Breakfast included

This fine three-star is well-cared for and very popular. An outdoor pool and lovely garden are among the perks enjoyed by guests. The Princess also has its own bar, restaurant and parking lot. Given its small size, you may have to reserve ahead for a room here.

GRAN ARIOSTO HOTEL ☆☆☆
Infanta Mercedes de San Martin 48
☎/*fax 261-429-3051*
40 rooms
Moderate
Breakfast included

Under the same management as the Gran Ritz, the Gran Ariosto is in a quiet residential part of town. It has a large lobby and rooms are carpeted and very comfortable.

Best Places to Eat

Italian trattorias and parrilladas are among the most prevalant and finest of Mendoza's restaurants. Regional specialties include *asado criollo* (barbecued goat and veal), *humitas* (sweet tamales), *patitas aliñadas* (spiced legs of beef or veal), *ternera con cuero* (veal cooked in its skin) and *tomatican* (stewed tomatoes). Of course, it would be almost unconscionable not to accompany one of these regional specialties with one of Mendoza's fine wines.

★ Did You Know?

Interestingly enough, Mendoza supplies the country with mineral water. The country's most popular is Villavicencio, which comes from a spring 1,750 meters above sea level.

Alive Price Scale
(per person)
Expensive: . . $50+
Moderate: . . $25+
Inexpensive: . . $25-

TORCUATRO
Arestides Villanueva 650
☎ 261-423-8170
Continental
Moderate/expensive

One of the newest arrivals in Mendoza, Torcuatro has quickly become one of the city's most exclusive dining establishments. You'll enjoy fine wine, great service and exquisitely prepared continental cuisine.

L'HARDY
Arestides Villanueva 537
☎ 261-429-3110
Continental
Dinner only Monday-Saturday from 9 pm
Moderate/expensive

Another newcomer, the intimate L'Hardy is a great "date" restaurant, regardless of whether the date is someone new or an old standby. Elegant stemware, fine table linens and an elegant dining room in a private home create a lovely setting for a memorable evening.

BRASERIAS
Las Heras 510, corner of Chile
☎ 425-4482
Parrilla
Lunch & dinner
Moderate

The menu stretches nearly as far as the expansive indoor/outdoor dining room at the ultra-modern Braserias. You can choose from among the different cuts of meat and chicken grilling on the circular parrilla/asador or try any of the

numerous pasta or international dishes. Whether or not you're in the mood for cocktails, be sure to take a look at the special drink (*agasajos*) menu. You're likely to discover something new. Ceiling fans keep things cool inside while you'll be at the mercy of the weather outside.

ALTO DE CHACRAS
Arestides Villanueva 303
☎ *423-6595*
Parrillada
Lunch & dinner
Moderate

The original Alto de Chacras is at Ruta Panamericana Km 9 in La Puntilla. Both are owned by the owner of Il Tucco.

This attractive restaurant prides itelf on serving only the finest cuts of Argentine beef. A generous salad bar is included with your meal.

RESTAURANT TREVI
Palace Hotel
Las Heras 70
☎ *423-3195*
Italian/International
Lunch & dinner
Moderate

This is another of the city's many Italian restaurants.

LA PLAZA
Espejo, corner with 25 de Mayo
☎ *423-3394*
International
Lunch & dinner
Moderate

Large stained glass windows and wine bottles decorate this otherwise unpretentious bistro.

Crêpes, fish, salads, meat and chicken are featured on the fairly simple menu.

TRATTORIA AVENI
25 de Mayo 1154 (across from the Casino)
☎ *438-0342*
Italian
Lunch & dinner
Moderate

Given its location, you can wisely assume that the Trattoria Aveni is a favorite among high rollers. As a matter of fact, it was recommended to us by a local VIP.

LA MARCHIGIANA
Patrias Mendocinas 1550
☎ *423-0751*
Italian/Argentine
Lunch & dinner
Moderate

A large adobe house with a thatched roof and garden in front is home to this fine, always-crowded Italo-Argentine restaurant. Patrons are drawn to the lovely *estancia*-like setting and good food. Pastas and typical Argentine dishes – *parrillada*, of course – dominate the menu.

TRATTORIA VECCHIA ROMA
Avenida España 1619
☎ *425-1491*
Italian
Moderate

You may have to wait for a table. This very popular trattoria is always busy. Reminiscent of a

cellar, the decor is fairly simple and so is the menu – uncomplicated yet very good.

IL TUCCO
Paseo Sarmiento 68
☎ *420-2565*
Between 9 de Julio & San Martín

Yet another simple and extremely popular trattoria. Be prepared to wait for a table at dinner time.

LOS LAGARES
Avenida Aristides Villanueva 650
☎ *429-0554*
Argentine Parrilla

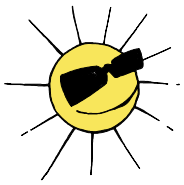
The dining room is spread throughout several rooms of this brick house where you'll feel less like a restaurant patron and more like a guest. Grilled meats are the specialty, but the international menu does offer some other options.

BOCCADORO
Mitre 1976
☎ *425-5056*
Parrilla
Lunch & dinner

Very similar to Los Lagares, Boccadoro is another *parrilla* in a former residence. Try to get a table in one of the rear rooms for some real ambience.

EL APARCERO
Sarmiento 695 (one block from the Casino)
Lunch & dinner
Parrilla
Moderate

An attractive crowd gathers at this fine restaurant. Grilled meats are the specialty. We recommend the *parrillada*, the *ternera milanesa* and the *pollo al horno.* El Aparcero is located in a white house.



Dawn to Dusk

Once in Mendoza, you'll find yourself falling in step with its unhurried pace. A morning or afternoon can be delightfully spent strolling through the city's many parks and plazas, alongside the *acequias* (irrigation ditches) flowing through the city. Mendoza's nearly ideal climate makes trips to the surrounding countryside all the more inviting. Pack a picnic lunch and head out to the nearby wineries. Finally, to experience Argentina's changing landscape, head west towards Chile on Route 7, through the fertile vineyards and orchards just outside the city to the rugged steppes of the Andes in the Parque Provincial Aconcagua, home of the highest peak in the southern and western hemispheres, Mount Aconcagua.

Walking Tour

We'll start our walk at the intersection of calles Alberdi and Ituzaingó on the **Plaza Pedro del Castillo**. Named for the original founder of Mendoza and two of the most important events in the city's history, this is Mendoza's most historic square. The original Plaza Independencia, it was here that the city was founded in 1562 and that General San Martín and his *Ejército*

de los Andes (Army of the Andes) swore allegiance to the Argentine Flag and named the Virgin of Carmen of the Cuyo their patron and protector. The city's first *cabildo* or town hall was on the east block of the plaza. Also here are the only remains of the original city following the devastating earthquake of 1861, the **San Francisco Ruins**. Built by the Jesuits in 1638, the church and its adjacent school were later ceded to the Franciscan Fathers following the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767. The church was seriously damaged in 1782 by the first earthquake which destroyed the city.

Also here is the **Museo de Area Fundacional** (☎ 425-6927).

Walking south on Ituzaingó, you'll be alongside the **Parque Bernardo O'Higgins** with its gardens, numerous species of trees and open meadows. Also here is the outdoor **Teatro Gabriela Mistral**, which hosts outdoor cultural activities all summer long.

Gabriela Mistral (1889-1957), a Chilean poet, was the first Latin American to receive the Nobel Prize for literature.

Turn right onto Calle Corrientes and continue west. The modern home on the corner of Corrientes and Calle José Federico Moreno occupies the site where General San Martín and his wife Remedios de Escaleda lived while he was governor of Mendoza from 1814 to 1816 and the birthplace of their daughter Merceditas.

The flag of the Ejército de los Andes was embroidered there.

Four blocks later you'll come to **Avenida San Martín**, one of the principal thoroughfares of the city. The park-like promenade running

alongside it is known as **La Alameda**. Typical of many Spanish cities, it dates back to the days of San Martín. All that remains from that period is the **Balcón Colonial**. Also on the Alameda is the **Centro Comercial y Turístico**, where you can watch traditional weavers plying their craft and enjoy performances of traditional and not so traditional dances. Nearby at Remedios de Escaleda 1843, the **Museo Histórico General San Martín** (☎ 425-7947) features memorabilia and documents from the War of Independence.

Continue south along Avenida San Martín to Calle Buenos Aires. Like many of the streets which intersect San Martín, Buenos Aires undergoes a name change, becoming Necochea on the west side of the Avenue. Turn onto Necochea and a block later you'll be on the northside of the **Plaza San Martín** with the ever-present statue of the General, majestically atop a galloping steed, at its center. Step inside the **Basílica de San Francisco**, final resting place of General San Martín's daughter Merceditas, her husband Mariano Balcarce, and one of their children. The church is also home of Our Lady of Carmen of the Cuyo, patron saint of the Ejército de los Andes. The baton the Virgin is holding was gallantly awarded to her by General San Martín following his victories against the Spanish in Chacabuco and Maipú in the War of Independence.

This area is also the heart of the city's banking district. Clustered around the plaza are the **Banco de la Nación Argentina**, the **Banco de Mendoza**, and the **Banco Hipotecario Nacional**, a fine example of the Neoplateresque architecture of the 1920s.

After spending some time in the Plaza, head back to Avenida San Martín and continue south to the **Paseo Sarmiento**. Outdoor tables line this garden-like pedestrian promenade dotted with fountains and pergolas, while a leafy canopy provides plenty of shade. Many of the airlines have offices along here and several fine shops are on the promenade as well. The Paseo's many *confiterías* and bars make it a popular meeting place, both day and night.

Stop for a coffee or a refreshing drink before continuing your walk.

The Paseo Sarmiento runs into the verdant **Plaza Independencia**, the heart of new Mendoza. It was founded when the city was rebuilt following the earthquake of 1861. Little wonder that this enormous plaza, which covers an area of four blocks and is filled with a wide variety of plants and trees, was originally called Parque Independencia. Avenida Mitre runs into the Plaza to become the **Paseo del Estado de Israel.** A large menorah and plaques commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the State of Israel in 1998. The **Museo Municipal de Arte Moderno** (☎ 257-279) and the **Teatro Municipal Julio Quintanilla** are both in the center of the Plaza. A hippie fair is held here on the weekends.

Notice the acequias (irrigation ditches).

Just a few steps away from the Plaza is the **Legislatura Provincial**, which had been built at the end of the last century to serve as a social club, only to be acquired by the provincial government who designated it the seat of its Legislature. Also nearby, at the corner of Calles Chile and Peru, is the **Teatro Independencia**, the city's primary center for the performing arts.

A few blocks south of the Plaza Independencia are the Plaza Italia and the Plaza España. Especially lovely is the **Plaza España**, east of the Plaza Independencia at the intersection of Avenida España and Montevideo. The history of the city's founding is colorfully told in Majolica tiles imported from Spain. The fountain at the plaza's center, also decorated with Spanish tiles, is reminiscent of those in Seville and other Andalusian towns. The **Plaza Italia**, dedicated to the many Italian immigrants who started anew in Mendoza, is west of the Plaza Independencia at the intersection of Montevideo and 25 de Mayo. Just off the plaza at Montevideo 544 is the **Museo del Pasado Cuyano** (☎ 423-6031). Once the home of Don Francisco Civit, one of the first governors of Mendoza, and seat of the Junta of Historic Studies, this fine museum contains an extensive collection of memorabilia and documents from throughout the history of the Cuyo region, including arms, flags and batons from the War of Independence.

Other Sights

Barrio Cívico

Follow Avenida Mitre south from Plaza Independencia to the administrative heart of Mendoza, the **Barrio Cívico** or **Parque Cívico** (Civic Park) as it is also called. Provincial as well as city government buildings are set amidst expansive green lawns, fountains and groves of pine, olive, linden and cedar trees. For a fantastic view of the city and the surrounding area, climb to the **Terraza Jardín Mirador** (Watchtower Terrace) on the seventh floor of the **Municipalidad de Mendoza** (the Municipal Palace). Next door at Calle Peltier 611, in what was the first teaching *bodega* in the province, is the **Museo del Vino Enoteca Giol** (The Giol Wine School Museum). Original oak casks, ancient machinery, and international and national prizes are displayed here. The authentic flag of the Ejército de los Andes, which was embroidered by the women of Mendoza, is displayed in the Sala de la Bandera (Flag Hall) in the **Casa de Gobierno** (Government Building). The **Aduana de Mendoza** (Customs House), **Centro de Congresos y Exposiciones Emilio Civit** (Emilio Civit Exposition Center), the **Palacio Policial** (Police Headquarters) and the **Poder Judicial and Tribunales Federales** (Provincial and Supreme Court House) are also in the Park.

✻ Tip

If possible, plan to be here on the second Thursday of the month at 11 am for the monthly Changing of the Guard ceremony.

Note: Emilio Civit becomes Avenida del Libertador in the park.

Parque San Martín

A magnificent wrought iron gate across Avenida Emilio Civit where it intersects with Avenida Boulogne Sur Mer marks the entrance to the Parque San Martín.

This ranks with New York's Central Park as one of the largest and most beautiful municipal parks we've ever visited. Its 1,035-acres extend from Avenida Boulogne Sur Mer on the western side of the city all the way to the beginning of the Andes foothills. Virtually a world unto itself, the park is home to 10 private clubs, including several tennis clubs, a golf club complete with an 18-hole course, and the Mendoza Regata Club. It also boasts a large artificial lake which you can tour aboard a Mississippi Riverboat, with departures every half-hour; or, for the do-it-yourselfer, you can rent a rowboat and explore the lake on your own. There is also a cardiovascular exercise circuit, *the Pista de Salud*, and plenty of paths for biking or roller blading.

Nature buffs will have a field day here. Not only is the park home to nearly 50,000 trees (count them if you can) and 700 species of plants, within the **Parque Aborigin** on the western

side of the park are several species of plants indigenous to South America. The park's zoo, **Jardín Zoológico**, is next to the Parque Aborigin and is considered one of the finest in South America. Here, hundreds of animals native to the wilds of the continent roam in partial freedom.

A source of great pride to the city is its rose garden, or ***rosaleda***, which runs along the eastern shore of the lake. Originally planted in 1919, it was renovated in 1993 and 4,500 new rosebushes were planted. This is definitely a sight not too be missed, especially when the roses are in bloom.

The Park is also home to several science museums, including:

- The **Universidad Nacional del Cuyo Archaeological Museum**;
- The **Domingo F. Sarmiento Natural Science Museum**;
- The **J.C. Moyano Natural Science and Anthropology Museum**;
- The **Provincial Forest and Park Museum**;
- The **M. Tellechea Mineralogy Museum**.

Additional sights in the park include the **Frank Romero Day Amphitheater**, in the western sector of the park not far from the base of the Cerro de la Gloria (see below), site of the crowning of the Queen of the Vintage at the

annual Wine Festival; and the **Estadio Islas Malvinas**, which was built for the 1978 World Cup. There is also a race track, **Club Hípico**, in the park.

El Cerro de la Gloria

The majestic feats of the Andean Army (Ejército de los Andes), in their victory against Spain in the War of Independence, have been immortalized in bronze by the Uruguayan sculptor Juan Manuel Ferrari in his **Monumento al Ejército de los Andes**. At 948 meters (3,109 feet) above sea level, the view overlooking Mendoza and the surrounding countryside is well worth the climb. To get here, follow Avenida Libertador through the Parque San Martín.

Look for the red roofs of the Barrio Dalvian, the most affluent neighborhood in Mendoza.

Avenida Las Heras & El Mercado Central

Two blocks north of Plazas Chile and San Martín, **Avenida Las Heras** was one of the city's original commercial zones. Today, it's home to several handicraft shops, outdoor cafés and **El Mercado Central**. This huge indoor market covers one full city block starting at Patricias Mendocinas and extending north to General Paz. Your senses will go wild as you pass vendor upon vendor selling fresh fruit, meat and fish along with local wines, chocolates, dried fruits and preserves and a host of other specialties. A visit here will give you a glimpse into the everyday life of many of Mendoza's residents.

Wine Making

Should your Argentine sojourn take you all the way to Mendoza, be sure to visit at least one of its 1,200 wineries. With proper planning you could visit a different winery each day of your visit, or spend a day in Maipú and visit several. Many are within a half-hour's drive of downtown Mendoza. Some are just minutes away. Any way you do it, a winery tour(s) is a delightful way to spend a morning, afternoon or even an entire day.

Mendoza Wines

Wine making is the #1 industry in Mendoza. 70% of Argentina's vineyards are here and nearly 70% of the country's wine is from the province. Chances are your local wine shop stocks at least one or two wines from Mendoza.

Spanish colonists from Santiago del Estero introduced the cultivation of grapes and winemaking to Mendoza in the XVI century. Winemakers in their native country, they recognized that the region's sandy soil, dry sunny climate and pure mountain water were ideal for the cultivation of grapes, and quickly set about to develop its great winemaking potential.

Wine making was introduced in Chile at the same time.

As time went on, French, Italian and new Spanish arrivals incorporated their own techniques, and introduced new varieties of grapes such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec, Semillón and

Chardonnay, and eventually developed Torrontés, a variety unique to Mendoza. While many of Mendoza's wineries have modernized in order to produce larger quantities of wine for export, others remain faithful to the traditional methods or maintain small museums dedicated to those traditions.

Winemaking is such an integral part of Mendoza's culture that it forms the basis for the largest festival of the year, the **Vendimia.** The festival starts in January and runs through mid-March, when it culminates with the crowning of the Festival Queen (*La Reina Nacional de la Vendimia).* Harvest festivals and other annual events, including the Blessing of the Harvest, individual harvest queen pageants and the Argentinean equestrian festival in Mendoza, along with a host of other cultural and artistic activities and parties are held in towns across the province during this three-month period. If you are going to be in Mendoza during the Vendimia, contact the tourist office ahead of time (☎ 24-5333) for a schedule of events.

Vendimia is the Spanish word for vintage.

Visiting the Wineries

Many area wineries are open to the public and offer regularly scheduled tours and tastings. Most have wine shops and a couple even have small museums on the premises. You can visit them on your own or join an organized tour given by one of the local travel agencies, such as **Turismo Maipú** at Espejo 207 in Mendoza

(☎ 429-4976). If you decide to do it on your own, ask your concierge to make the arrangements for you.

Most wineries are in Maipú (15 kilometers/nine miles southeast of Mendoza) and Luján de Cuyo (18 kilometers south from Mendoza on the Costanera Sur).

Time permitting, you may want to plan a day in Maipú where, in additional to wineries, you can also visit the lovely downtown area and some traditional agricultural concerns. Several wineries are not far from downtown Maipú, including our first choice, the **Casa Giol**, home of the Museo Nacional del Vino y la Vendimia. The original Giol Winery boasts the world's largest wine cellar with a capacity of 6,000,000 liters, as well as a cider and champagne factory. Follow your tour with lunch at the **Cava Vieja** restaurant, which is located in a restored wine cellar.

Other wineries in Maipú that are open to the public include:

Bodega La Rural, Museo del Vino San Felipe (☎ 497-3590) which is on Montecaseros and, as its name suggests, also has a small museum.

The small family-run **Bodega Artesanal Domaine St. Diego**, at Villanueva 3821 de Lunluta (☎ 439-5557). Located amidst vineyards well over 100 years old. Call ahead to arrange for a visit.

Two of the largest wineries in the province, the **Bodega Peñaflor** (☎ 497-2388) at Mitre and Nueva Mayarga, and the **Bodegas López**, at Ozamis 375 (☎ 497-2407), also offer guided tours.

Several agricultural concerns are also open to the public. These include the family-owned **Copa Factory** (*Fábrica de Productos Copas),* which produces the dried fruits and preserves the region is known for, and the **Cabaña Guatana**, breeders of pedigreed horses. In addition to guided tours of the facilities, the Cabaña Guatana will arrange trail rides along the Mendoza River.

If you'd like to visit a working farm, the **Finca Dobler**, a dairy farm, and the **Vivero Y Granja La Nona** are also open to the public.

Maipú also has its share of cultural sites. Built prior to 1810, the **Solar Histórico Casa de Ozamis**, Vergara 88 (Monday-Saturday, 9 am to 6:30 pm), was the home of Don José A. Ozamis, one of the founders of the town of Maipú.

Colonial churches include the **Iglesia Nuestra Señora de la Merced** on Calle Padre Vásquez, the **Capilla Histórica de Barrancas** Calle La Capilla Barrancas, and the **Santuario de Maria Auxiliadora**, Ruta Provincial 50, Rodeo del Medio.

Historic winemaking techniques are recreated at the **Museo Interactivo de la Enología** at

Ruta Provincial No. 50, Rodeo del Medio. Our recommended wineries are:

ANTIGUO BODEGA GIOL
Ozamis 1040
Maipú
☎/fax 261/497-6777
Guided tours: Monday to Saturday 9 am to 7 pm; Sundays and holidays 11 am to 2 pm
Reservations requested (though not essential)

Founded in 1896, the Giol Winery is a true centenarian and one of the most historic wineries in the country. Though various producers in Luján and Maipú have combined their efforts to operate the modern Bodegas Giol as a co-op, you can still experience the original winery as it was during the days of its founders Don Juan Giol and Don Bautista Gargantini. The spirit of the period has also been recaptured in the Cava Vieja restaurant, where visitors can enjoy fine international and local cuisine (accompanied of course by the house wine) in a beautifully restored wine cellar.

A winery tour followed by lunch at the Cava Vieja is a wonderful way to spend an afternoon.

BODEGAS CHANDON
Ruta 40
Luján de Cuyo
☎ 490-9966
Guided tours: April to January, Monday-Friday, 11 am, 12:30 pm, 2, 3:30; February and March, Monday-Friday, 9:30 am, 11, 12:30 pm, 2, 3:30, 5, Saturdays, 9:30 am, 11, 12:30 pm

In 1959 winemaking studies conducted in the foothills of the Andes within view of the Tupungato Volcano revealed that the soil con-

ditions, the water and the climate met the rigorous standards of Moët & Chandon. The internationally acclaimed winemaker, best known for champagne, wasted no time and quickly set out to establish operations in Mendoza. Forty years later, the Chandon winery in Luján de Cuyo is one of Argentina's finest, producing several varieties of fine wines of inimitable quality including Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Malbec, Syrah, Chardonnay and, of course, Champagne.

BODEGAS ESCORIHUELA
Belgrano and Pte. Alvear, Godoy Cruz
☎ 424-2744
Guided tours: 9:30 am, 10:30, 11:30, 12:30 pm, 2:30 and 3:30

In constant operation since 1884, this is one of the oldest wineries in the country that is still totally operational. You should not leave Mendoza without visiting at least one winery no matter how limited your time, and Bodegas Escorihuela's convenient location make it the most logical choice. It's just two miles outside the center of Mendoza and is an easy cab ride away and well worth a visit.

Getting here is easy. Follow Avenida Costanera south to Presidente Alvear, then turn right. The Bodega is just a few blocks farther.

Another nearby option is the **Bodega Alfredo Catena** in Chacras de Coria (☎ 496-0446).

Route 7 Westward to Chile & Aconcagua

A highpoint of your visit to Mendoza (no pun intended) is the drive from Mendoza to mighty Mt. Aconcagua, not only the highest peak in the Andes but in all of the western and southern

hemispheres. Traveling west along National Route 7, which stretches across Argentina to connect Buenos Aires with Chile at the Paso Internacional de La Cumbre, you'll begin a steady climb into the Andes. Thermal springs and interesting rock formations dominate the landscape as it changes from fertile fields and orchards just outside the city to the rugged steppes of the Parque Provincial Aconcagua

The **Villavicencio Gorge** is an area of springs, pools and cascades 30 miles outside Mendoza. Nowadays it is perhaps best known as the source of Villavicencio Mineral Water which you will undoubtedly have seen, if not sampled, on restaurant menus and in shops throughout Mendoza. Although long since closed, the thermal springs here gave rise to a very popular bathing resort. It is believed that the area was originally a gathering place for the Indians after *guanaco* and *ñandú* hunts (see below). During the early days of the colonial period, it served as a primary rest stop on the road between Mendoza and Chile.

Villavicencio is as good as any mineral water in the world, comparable to Perrier and San Pellegrino.

In the beginnings of the 18th century, Captain José Villavicencio made his home here, where he built a ranch and grape press mill. He also based his mining operations in the Paramillo de Upsallata mines here. Traces of the gold, silver and lead mines can still be found throughout the area.

Nearby, **Los Caracoles** offers a 15-mile climb with panoramic views, accentuated by steep ravines, along a twisting highway (one-way

only). You'll pass the **Del Toro Gorge** as well as **El Balcón,** the 600-meter/1,968-foot abyss where Darwin studied the petrified remains of the Araucanian civilization during his journey to Chile. The route leads to a mountain plain populated by *ñandúes*.

Ñandúes

A member of the rhea family, as is the North American ostrich, these tall flightless birds are found throughout Argentina and are known for their great speed.

Your first glimpse of Upsallata, next en route, will be from **Cruz de Paramillos**. At 3,000 meters/9,840 feet above sea level, this is also a fine vantage point from which to admire the striking contrast between the *pre-cordillera*, or foothills, and the Andes.

✻ Tip

Los Caracoles is occasionally closed to traffic. Make sure the route is passable before setting out. You may want to take an alternate route through the Cajón del Río Mendoza, las Termas de Cachueta and the Valle de Potrerillos.

Lovely **Upsallata** takes its name from the Quechua word *Chuspallacta,* which means enclosed town. It is set in a beautiful valley formed by the Cordillera del Tigre to the west and the Santa Elena Gorge and Cordón de

Bonilla to the east. The Inca Road is believed to have passed through here. In fact, Inca artifacts, including arrowheads, painted ceramics, and hieroglyphics, have been found nearby in Ranchillos Fundición, Tamborillos and Yalguaraz. The area was equally important to General San Martín and his Army of the Andes. Many of the weapons used in their fight for independence were cast at **Las Bóvedas**, a group of well-preserved buildings five kilometers (three miles) outside town. **Las Casuchas de Upsallata**, also nearby, date back to the 18th century. They provided shelter to travelers as well as San Martín's troops.

★ Did You Know?

The General's first battle in the War of Independence took place at **Puente Colonial Fortín Pichueta**, a fortress just 15 miles outside Upsallata.

A popular destination, Upsallata boasts several restaurants, regional handicraft shops and hotels, including the four-star **Hotel Valle Andino** on Route 7 (fax 2624/420-003 or 425-8424). Skiers often stay in Upsallata rather than at the resorts, which tend to be slightly higher priced.

Continuing on Route 7 you'll pass through the railway town of **Punta de Vacas**, 2,400 meters (7,900 feet) above sea level and one of the last stops before the tunnel to Chile. The International Customs Office is based here. The main

tributaries of the Mendoza River flow through here. The Las Vacas River is fed by the glaciers of Aconcagua while the Tupungato is fed by the glaciers of the Juncal, Nevado, Plomo and Tupungato Mountains. The south-flowing Las Cuevas River passes through here as well.

Taking its name from the *Cruz de Caña* (Cane Cross) Stream which crosses it and the naturally formed sculpture of a cathedral and praying monks at its base, **Los Penitentes,** at 2,580 meters (8,462 feet) above sea level, is best known as a winter resort.

The **Cerro Las Leñas** (Las Leñas Hill) shelters the slopes from west winds to ensure fine dry powder and average daytime temperatures of 59°F with plenty of sunshine. Skiers enjoy optimal conditions throughout the season, which usually runs from June to late September or mid-October. Los Penitentes is only 22 miles from its Chilean counterpart, Portillo, making it easy (depending on driving conditions) for avid skiers to combine both resorts in one trip.

For information regarding skiing, turn to Outdoor Argentina *on page 493.*

Just six miles beyond Los Penitentes is **El Puente del Inca**, a naturally formed sandstone arch spanning the Las Cuevas River. The bridge is 47 meters (154 feet) long and 28 meters (92 feet) wide. There are five thermal springs in the area, each with its own healing qualities based on its unique temperature and mineral content. While the area can be visited any time of year, winter, when the thermal springs and snows meet to create a singular effect, is especially lovely. Just in sight of the

bridge is **Los Puquios**, a cemetery dedicated to those who lost their lives climbing Aconcagua.

The **Parque Provincial Aconcagua** is also on Route 7. It was founded on July 29, 1983 to preserve the flora, fauna and archaeological remains of the area surrounding Mt. Aconcagua and covers an area of 175,440 acres. The landscape, beautiful in a rugged way, is barren and threatening, with vegetation concentrated along the river banks. Snowdrifts, glaciers and lakes have formed along the slopes of the mountains, which range from 3,900 to nearly 7,000 meters (12,800-22,960 feet) above sea level. Guanacos and foxes roam the park, while falcons, eagles and condors patrol the skies. A permit is required to visit the park and should be obtained from the subsecretary of tourism in Mendoza before you leave the city. Three- to 15-day permits are issued. Trekking arrangements, including hiring guides and mule teams can be made in Puente del Inca.

At over 21,000 feet above sea level, the northern peak of Aconcagua is considered a must by serious climbers. In 1897 Matías Zurbriggen became the first to climb Aconcagua. Hundreds follow his brave example every summer. Aconcagua's southern peak reaches 5,933 meters (19,460 feet). The park is home to the highest permanent mountain refuge in the world, **Refugio Independencia**, at 6,500 feet above sea level. The highest hotel in the world is also nearby, the Hotel Refugio Plaza de Mulas.

★ Did You Know?

In 1985 the mummified remains of a young boy dating to the Inca period were found on the southwestern flank of the mountain.

Las Cuevas, 10 miles beyond Puente del Inca, is the final stop before passing through the tunnels to San Felipe, Chile. Towering over the tunnel marking the border with Chile stands **El Cristo Redentor**, Christ of the Andes. The work of Argentine sculptor Mateo Alonso, who cast the figure from the melted bronze of the guns used by the Army of the Andes, this impressive figure is a symbol of the brotherhood between Argentina and Chile. It was dedicated in 1902 and stands seven meters high (23 feet) on a granite pedestal (which adds another six) and weighs in at four tons. At 650 meters (2,132 feet) above Las Cuevas, the statue offers an incredible view of the entire Mendoza River Valley, Aconcagua, Tolosa and Chile. Follow the signs for Los Caracoles to reach the top.

The Inscription

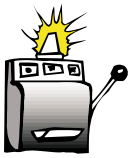
The inscription on the statue reads: *"Se desplomerán primero estas montañas antes que chilenos y argentinos rompan la paz jurada al pie del Cristo Redentor."* (These mountains will collapse before the Chileans and Argentines break the peace sworn between them at the foot of Christ the Redeemer.)

Provided you have your passport with you, you may want to drive through the tunnels to Chile. A series of 19 tunnels stretches just over three kilometers (1.86 miles), cutting through the Andes, to connect the two countries. The first tunnel was built in 1910 for the railroad and is currently inoperative. The auto tunnel was finished in 1979. The toll is $1.50 to Chile and $3.50 to return. Flags mark the Chilean/Argentine border. Travelers such as ourselves who are accustomed to the Lincoln and Holland Tunnels in New York find it especially hard to believe that these tunnels are 2½ miles above sea level!

Mendoza After Dark

Mendoza's cultural calendar is relatively full with lectures and performances at the University, performances by nationally as well as internationally acclaimed artists at the Independencia and Quintanilla theaters, and performances by local theater groups at the smaller theaters about town. And of course, there's always the movies. Mendoza has eight cinemas, with most offering fairly recent US and international films. Check the entertainment section of the daily newspaper *Los Andes* for listings.

Most of the *confiterías* and bars along the Paseo Sarmiento and Avenida Las Heras remain open well into the night. Other after dark options include:



Gambling

CASINO PROVINCIAL
25 de Mayo 1123
☎ 234-888
Open: Sunday-Thursday 5 pm-3 am
Friday and Saturday 5:30 pm-3:30 am
Slot machines: 11 am to closing
Admission: $2 (night only)

Mendoza's casino is probably one of the biggest we've ever visited in our travels through South America. It is in a large white building just one block from the Plaza Independencia. Tuxedo-clad waiters and high ceilings lend an air of elegance to the game rooms, which feature roulette and black jack along with a separate room for slot machines. The minimum bet is $10 at the tables.

Blackjack aficionados beware. You must declare the value of an ace before hitting another card, a major benefit to the house.

There is a nightclub with a show and dancing within the casino. Though there is no dress code, you should dress appropriately.

Pubs

CHARLES DICKENS PUB
Aristides Villanueva 290
☎ 423-5928
Open: Every day 9 pm-5 am

Location aside, it will be tough to find a pub which more faithfully reproduces the spirit of Ye Olde Leather Bottle Pub where Charles Dickens met regularly with members of the Pickwick Club. Olde English architecture and decor create an atmosphere of cordiality. The

menu features sandwiches and typical pub fare accompanied by national and imported beverages. A fine choice for an evening of darts and conversation.

Other pub-type nightspots include the **Harley Pub** at Cocodi 423, which offers food and drink and stays open till late; the **Juan Sebastian Bar** at Villanueva 787, where you can enjoy drinks by the fireplace or shoot pool in the backroom; and the **Blues Bar** at Villanueva 687. All are located within walking distance of each other.

Discos in Chacras de Coria

Although there are a couple of discos in town, including **La Luz** on Avenida San Martín and **Saudades**, at the corner of San Martín and Barraquero, the best discos are in **Chacras de Coria**, a resort town just 14 kilometers (nine miles) outside Mendoza via National Route 7 or 40. The concierge at your reception should be able to give you clear direction and details regarding which discos are in vogue at the time of your visit. Popular choices include **the Dessert Pub, Sketch**, **Aloha, Al Diablo Disco Pub** and **Decada**.

You will need a car or cab for an evening here.

Shop Till You Drop

Obviously, **wine** will be at the top of your shopping list while you're visiting Mendoza. The region is also known for its cider, dried fruits and preserves, and chocolates. **Weaving** is the most widely practiced handicraft. Technique,

color and design vary with the different Indian influences present throughout the region. While items produced in the northeast feature bright colors and bold designs of the Huarpe Indians, the more somber colors and geometric motifs of the south are typical of the Araucans.

Leather craftsmanship also runs high. Saddles, harnesses, *boleadores* and other ranching equipment are created using an infinite variety of plaiting techniques, limited only by the imagination and skill of the artisan. **Basketweaving** is also widely practiced. Using a technique developed by the Huarpe Indians, basketweavers from the Cuanacache region of Lavalle weave reeds into baskets and hampers, and then use dyed wool to create colorful designs.

You'll find **woven articles** such as ponchos, blankets, rugs, wall hangings and assorted clothing in generous supply, along with baskets and crafted leather items in the many artisan shops along **Avenida Las Heras**. Head to the **Mercado Central** at Las Heras near P. Mendocinas for foodstuffs.

No city should be without a modern shopping mall and Mendoza is no exception. **Mendoza Plaza Shopping** is four miles outside the city on the highway to Buenos Aires, and is home to 100 shops and boutiques, including a branch of the department store Falabella, a large supermarket, several fast food stops and restaurants, and a modern car wash. There is a covered parking lot as well.

*** Tip**

Visitors to Mendoza enjoy discounts at many mall shops when they obtain a V.I.P card at the reception area.

There is also a lovely shopping arcade in town. **Galerías Piazza** is located on Avenida San Martín between the Paseo Sarmiento and Rivadavia, next door to the Diario Los Andes building. The main shopping streets are Paseo Sarmiento, Avenidas Mitre, Las Heras and San Martín.

If you prefer less conventional shopping, the city's **hippie fair** is held every weekend in the Plaza Independencia, from 11 am to 9 pm on Saturdays and 4 to 9 pm on Sundays. You'll find the usual leather goods, jewelry, art, copper and brass pieces and other "hippie fare."

The fair starts on a small scale on Friday.

EL TURISTA
Avenida Las Heras 351
☎ *234-102*

This huge shop houses what appears to be an infinite supply of regional goods ranging from wine and preserves to leather goods, clothing, hats, art and wall hangings.

LAS VIÑAS: CENTRO ARTESANAL ARGENTINO
Avenida Las Heras 399 (at the corner of Avenida Mitre)
☎ *251-520*

After taking part in the wine tasting, we found Las Viñas to be an especially fun place to shop.

In addition to wines and regional specialties such as chocolates, dried fruits and preserves, handicrafts from across Argentina are featured here. You can find silver jewelry and flatware handcrafted by *gauchos*, musical instruments, lovely ceramics, lots of leather, blankets, rugs and wall hangings, sweaters, furs and many other regional items.

PURA CEPA
Avenida Mitre 1827
Open: Monday-Friday, 9 am-1:30 pm, 5-9 pm; Saturday, 10 am-2 pm, 6-9 pm

The wine casks out front are a very fitting landmark for this huge wine shop. Wines from throughout the region are featured here along with *artesanías* (local handicrafts).

LA CASA DEL VINO
Aristides Villanueva 160
☎ *240690*

Also a fine shop, the Casa Del Vino offers not only wine but locally produced candies, preserves and juices as well as *artesanías.*

KUEROS
San Martín 1331

You'll find a wide selection of fashionable leather items at this fairly upscale shop. The main shop is in Buenos Aires.

If you're in the need of a few assorted sundries try **Tía**, a 5¢-and-10¢ type of shop on Avenida San Martín. **Musimundo**, also on San Martín, is a good choice for records and CDs. **Librería Y** is a large bookstore at Avenida San Martín 1252.

Mendoza A-Z

AIRLINE OFFICES: The **American Airlines** office is at Espejo 167, fifth floor (☎ 425-9078). The **United** office is nearby at Espejo 183 in Suite 13 on the first floor (☎ 438-1643). **Aerolíneas Argentinas** has an office at Sarmiento 82 (☎ 420-4170). **DINAR** is a few doors down at Sarmiento 69 (☎ 420-4520) and **LAPA** is at España 1012 (☎ 429-1061). Plumerillo International Airport is six kilometers (3.6 miles) outside town on National Route 40 (☎ 448-7128).

BUS STATION: The Del Sol Bus Terminal is at the intersection of Costanera and Avenida Acceso Este (☎ 431-3001).

CAR RENTAL: The **Avis** office is at Primitiva de la Reta 248 (☎ 429-1867). **Dollar** has an office at P. De la Reta 931 (☎ 424-0418) and **Hertz** is at Chile 1124 (☎ 423-3000). **Luva**, a local agency, is at Alem 39 (☎ 425-3104).

CURRENCY EXCHANGE: There are three foreign exchange offices within a few steps of each other on Avenida San Martín. **Cambio Santiago** is at 1199 (☎ 424-8024); the **Exprinter Office** is at 1198 (☎ 438-0333); and **Maguitur** is at 1203 (☎ 438-0396). You can also change money at the **Banco de Mendoza** on the corner of San Martín and Gutierrez (☎ 423-4500).

DAILY NEWSPAPER: Los Andes is the daily newspaper. Movie and theater listings

and the cultural calendar are usually in the second section of Los Andes.

EMERGENCY: In case of an emergency, call the **Servicio Coordinado de Emergencia** (Emergency Service Coordinator) at ☎ 424-8000. To call the emergency police directly, dial ☎ 424-4444.

POST OFFICE: The **Central Post Office** is on the corner of Avenida San Martín and Colón (☎ 429-1190).

PHARMACIES: The **Del Aguila Pharmacy** on the corner of San Martín and Buenos Aires (☎ 23-3391) is open from 8 am until midnight every day, as is the **Mitre Pharmacy** at Avenida Colón 361 (☎ 25-5763). **Del Puente**, a 24-hour pharmacy, is at the corner of Las Heras and Avenida España (☎ 420-3936).

SUPERMARKET: The **Metro Supermarket** is at Las Heras 310 near P. Mendocinas.

TAXI SERVICE: To phone a cab, call **Brisas** at ☎ 437-8080 or 430-2225.

TELEPHONE DIAL CODE: 261 (see page 14).

TOURIST OFFICE: The Municipal Tourist Office, **Centro de Información Turística Municipalidad de Mendoza**, has offices at Avenida San Martín and Garibaldi (☎ 24-5333), 9 de Julio 500 on the mezzanine (☎ 24-6500), and Avenida Las Heras 670. The Provincial Tourist Office, **Subsecretaria Provincial de Turismo**, is at Avenida San Martín 1143 (☎ 24-2800).

TOUR OPERATOR/TRAVEL AGENT: Ski trips, winery tours and excursions to the countryside outside Mendoza can be arranged through **Empresa de Viajes y Turismo Herrera** at Avenida Las Heras 524 (☎ 420-3708) or **Turismo SEPEAN** at San Juan 1070 (☎ 420-4162).

Of course, the province of Mendoza offers much in the way of adventure tourism, including but not limited to river rafting, trekking, mountain climbing, horseback riding and paragliding. If this fits your style, contact **Aymará Turismo y Aventura** at 9 de Julio 983 (☎/fax 261-420-0607; e-mail aymara@satlink.com); **EUSA Adventure** at Las Heras 699 (☎ 261-420-1654; www.turismouspallata.com; e-mail EUSA@satlink.com); or **Cumbres Andinas** at Espejo 111 (☎ 261-438-0505).

Iguazú Falls

Iguazú Falls is the least known of the world's three greatest waterfalls, but this has done nothing to steal its mighty thunder. Iguazú is higher than Victoria, her South African sister, and twice as wide as Niagara. Over 1,700 cubic meters (60,000 cubic feet) of water per second flow through this series of 275 falls on the Iguazú River, the natural border with Brazil, in Argentina's northeasternmost province of Misiones.

The falls were officially discovered by the Portuguese explorer Alvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca during his arduous journey from the Brazilian province of Santa Catalina to Asunción, Paraguay in 1541. He christened them *Saltos de Santa María* in honor of the patron virgin of his trip, but it is their original Indian name that endures today – *Iguazú,* which means "Mighty Waters" in Guaraní.

How the Falls Were Created

As the legend goes, the falls were created centuries before their modern discovery by the force of a young Indian couple's love. Taroba, son of the chief of the Caigengue tribe that ruled the area between the Iguazú and Paraná rivers, and Naipi, a blind princess, were inseparable. One morning as they were walking along the river in the Valley of the Butterflies, Naipi asked Taroba to describe the sights to her. He did

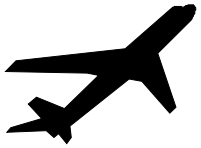
so until they reached a small hill. At that point, Naipi, bursting with curiosity, demanded that he tell her what he saw. Taroba described the Iguazú River "rounding the valley like a mighty warrior."

Stifled by her blindness, Naipi screamed in anguish. With a heavy heart, Taroba kissed Naipi's hand and moved to the edge of the river where he prayed to Mboi for Naipi's sight. Suddenly the river stopped and all was silent until a great roar came forth from the earth. An earthquake ripped the ground, leaving a deep gorge in its wake, which in turn diverted the river to create the Iguazú Falls. Naipi, now sighted, became the first person to see the falls. Unfortunately, her lover Taroba, lost his life in their creation. In a full moon the falls reverberate with the painful cries of Naipi pleading for her lover's return.

Tourism began to grow up around the falls at the turn of the century. In 1898, the first group of tourists visited the falls, traveling by mule from Puerto Iguazú. Two years later, a group made the trip in a wagon pulled by six horses, two in front and four behind. Machete-bearing guides, whose job it was to blaze a trail through the dense jungle, led the way. Development of the region was initiated by Victoria Aguirre who, upon being unable to reach them in an early expedition, donated 3,000 pesos for the construction of a road to the falls. Its construction was completed through the generosity of

the Núñez y Gibaja family who donated 15,000 pesos and all the equipment necessary to finish it.

Getting There

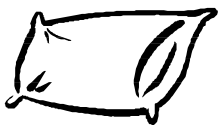


Aerolíneas Argentinas offers several flights daily between Buenos Aires and Puerto Iguazú. Flight time is one hour and 50 minutes and a roundtrip ticket costs approximately $370 (unrestricted fare).

It is also possible to make the trip by train, bus, or rental car via National Route 12 north from Buenos Aires. Though significantly less expensive, bus or train travel takes much longer, making both alternatives rather impractical unless you have two travel days to spare. It is at least a 24-hour trip by bus or train. Round-trip tickets are around $100. The **Expreso Singer** (☎ 4313-2355, ticket windows 46 & 47) and **Tigre Iguazú** (☎ 4313-3915, ticket window 48) buslines offer two departures daily from the Plaza Once terminal at the intersection of Bartolomé Mitre and Ecuador. The **General Urquiza** train line, Avenida F. Lacroze 4181, covers the route between Buenos Aires and Posadas, where you must then catch a bus to Puerto Iguazú, with departures on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Sunday mornings. Sleeping accommodations are available and must be reserved in advance (☎ 4553-5213).

★ Tip

If you are planning to spend one or two days in Iguazú and then return to Buenos Aires, we recommend that you leave the bulk of your luggage at your hotel in Buenos Aires and pack an overnight bag. You can do without sweaters and heavy clothing since it's hot and humid in Iguazú all year long. An umbrella or light rain slicker is a good idea if you're travelling during the summer.



Best Places to Stay at Iguaçú Falls

Since tourism is the primary industry in Puerto Iguazú and its Brazilian counterpart Foz do Iguaçu, you'll find plenty of hotels in all price ranges on both sides of the Falls. There are two five-star hotels within the National Park, one on the Brazilian side and the other in Argentina. Rooms fill up quickly during the summer, December-March 31; you'll need reservations in advance. Prices are comparable, but for a change of ambience, you might try a hotel on the Brazilian side. There are several fine hotels on the Brazilian side just outside the town of Foz do Iguaçú, on the road leading to the falls.

Alive Price Scale

Deluxe: . . $200+
Expensive: . $120+
Moderate: $60-120
Inexpensive: $35-60
Budget: under $35

Hotels in Argentina

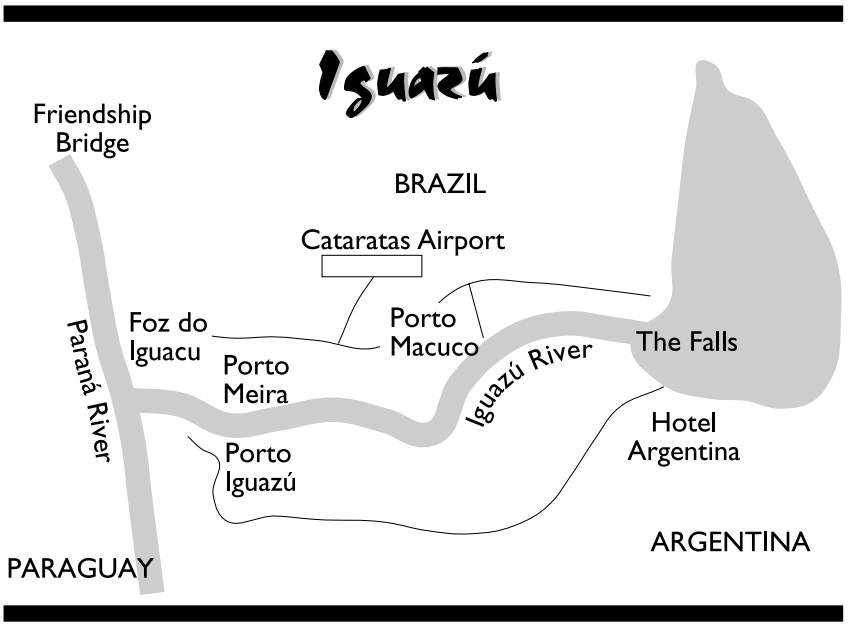
HOTEL INTERNACIONAL ☆☆☆☆☆
Parque Nacional Iguazú
☎ *3757-420-748; fax 3757-420-749*

Reservation Office in Buenos Aires: Av. Madero 1020
☎ 4311-4259; fax 4312-0488
E-mail iguazu@impsat1.com
www.iguazufalls.com
180 rooms
Deluxe

If you look forward to falling asleep and waking up to the roar of the falls, the Internacional, located within sight of the falls in the National Park, is for you. Besides a fantastic view of the falls, it has three tennis courts, a swimming pool, a nightclub, casino and three restaurants.

IGUAZU GRAND HOTEL RESORT & CASINO ☆☆☆☆☆
Ruta 12
☎ 3757-498-050; fax 3757-498-060
60 suites
Deluxe

The Grand is the newest and quite possibly the most luxurious of the area's five star hotels. All rooms are suites with balconies. Dining options include the poolside La Terraza for informal dining, the elegant yet still casual El Jardín which features both regional and international cuisine, and the breakfast lounge where an ample buffet is served in the mornings and cocktails in the afternoon. When not visiting the falls, you can work out at the fitness center or relax at one of the three outdoor pools. The European-style casino deals out Baccarat, Black Jack, and Roulette in the evenings and you can also try your luck at the slots.



HOTEL ESTURION ☆☆☆☆☆
Avenida Tres Fronteras 650
☎ *3757-420-020; fax 3757-420-414*
122 rooms
Deluxe

The Esturion is located not far from where Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay meet. It features the amenities expected of a five-star hotel and also offers a number of recreational facilities including a tennis court, children's playground, game rooms, a fitness center, swimming pool, an athletic field and a nightclub.

HOTEL CATARATAS ☆☆☆☆☆
Ruta 12
☎ *3757-421-220; fax 3757-421-100*
50 rooms
Expensive

Smaller than our previous selections, the Hotel Cataratas is a fine five-star value.

HOTEL EL LIBERTADOR ☆☆☆☆
Bompland 475
☎ *3757-420-027*
Office in Buenos Aires:
Av. Corrientes 1115, 3rd Floor

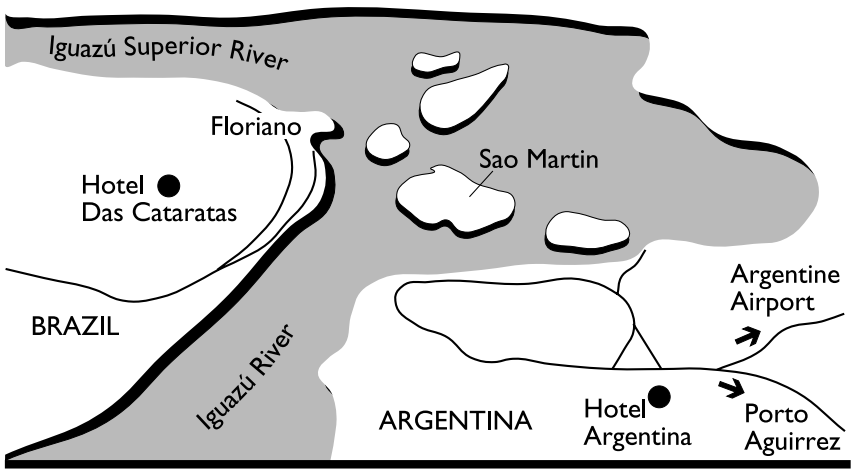
The El Libertador is a fine four-star hotel with a pool – a must here – and a restaurant.

Hotels In Brazil

HOTEL DAS CATARATAS ☆☆☆☆☆
Av. das Cataratas, Km 28
(in the National Park)
☎ *045-521-7000; fax 045-574-1688*
200 rooms
Deluxe

Similar to its Argentine counterpart, The Hotel Internacional, the Brazilian Hotel Das Cataratas is set in the Iguaçu National Park and offers a spectacular view of the Falls. Native animals roam freely amidst its lush and

Iguazú Falls



exotic natural setting, which also includes tennis courts and a swimming pool. There are two restaurants, a piano bar near the pool, a lounge and a game room. Rooms are equipped with TV, minibar, music and air conditioning.

HOTEL BOURBON ☆☆☆☆☆
Estrada das Cataratas, Km 2.5
☎ *045-523-1313; fax 045-574-1110*
Expensive

The quaint Bourbon is an excellent five-star hotel 2½ kilometers (1½ miles) outside Foz, with extensive grounds, two swimming pools, tennis courts, athletic fields, a fine restaurant and piano bar.

HOTEL SAN MARTIN ☆☆☆☆
Estrada das Cataratas, Km 17
142 rooms
☎ *045-23-2323; fax 045-743-207*
Moderate

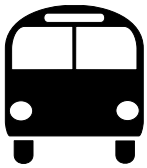
The San Martín is closer to the falls than the Bourbon. Wooden floors and wood-beamed ceilings within, and outdoor facilities that include tennis courts, soccer fields, and a miniature golf course, create a country club-like setting.

Best Places to Eat

Native fish, fresh from the Iguazú and Paraná rivers and prepared in a variety of ways, are the regional specialties. When scanning a menu, look for **dorado, surubí,** and **sábalo**, or ask your waiter for a recommendation.

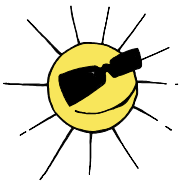
Neither Puerto Iguazú nor Foz do Iguaçú has truly outstanding restaurants. If your hotel has a restaurant, you may do just as well there. However, there are a few worthwhile options on both sides of the border. In Puerto Iguazú, **El Tío Querido**, Pto. Moreno 345, **El Quincho del Tio Querido**, Bompland and Perito Moreno, and the more economical **Chaco**, Córdoba 106, feature grilled meats (*parrillada)*. **La Rueda**, at the intersection of Avenida Aguirre and Córdoba, is a reasonably priced choice for pasta. For authentic *churrasco,* the Brazilian counterpart of the Argentinean *parrillada*, try **Churrasquería Buffalo Branco** at Rua Rebouças 530, or **Churrasquería Rafahin Campestre**, in Foz do Iguaçú. Another fine choice on the Brazilian side of the falls is the **Galeteria La Mama**, Avenida das Cataratas 1301, a popular all-you-can-eat restaurant which specializes in pasta and *galeto*, spit-roasted chicken.

Getting to the Falls



Several local tour operators offer trips to the falls, but there is no reason why you can't handle it on your own. Getting there is easy from both sides of the border. If you've rented a car, follow Route 12 to the falls if you're in Argentina, or the Estrada das Cataratas if you're in Brazil. Both lead to the entrance of the park. Otherwise, there is bus service on both sides of the falls and your hotel will be able to provide you with an up-to-date schedule and rates.

Buses run between the falls and the Terminal Puerto Iguazú at 45 minute intervals starting at 6:40 in the morning until 8:15 in the evening.



Dawn to Dusk

"Argentina pone el espectáculo y Brasil cobra la entrada." (Argentina puts on the show and Brazil charges admission.)

This popular saying is the key to seeing the falls. Since 85% of them are on the Argentinean side of the Iguazú River, the best views are from Brazil, while on the Argentinean side you will walk along paths and wooden walkways, known as *pasarelas*, occasionally feeling the spray of the falls. The falls are located in the national park which spans the two countries, the **Parque Nacional Iguazú** (Argentina)/ **Parque Nacional do Iguaçú** (Brazil), and there is an admission charge at either entrance. If possible, allow yourself two days to see the falls, spending one in Argentina and the other in Brazil. This will probably leave you with some free time for lounging at poolside, which is why a hotel with a pool is so important here.

Many of the wooden walkways, called pasarelas, on the the Argentinean side of the falls were destroyed by a flood in 1983. They are slowly being rebuilt as finances allow.

✻ Tip

Although often overlooked by visitors, the flora and fauna of the park, which actually encloses a tropical rain forest, are just as amazing as the falls themselves. We cover them in the section on National Parks, page 495.

The 275 falls are arranged in a semi-circle 2,700 meters (8,850 feet) long. Most are concentrated along the Río Iguazú Inferior, the lower portion of the Iguazú River. You'll pass various falls (*saltos)* as you wander along the paths and walkways, including the **Salto Alvar Núñez, Salto Adán y Eva** (Adam and Eve), **Salto Rivadavia** and the **Salto Tres Mosqueterros** (the Three Musketeers), until you reach the most spectacular of them all, the **Garganta del Diablo** (Devil's Throat). Here, the Iguazú Superior crashes into the Inferior 70 meters (230 feet) below. Shared by Argentina and Brazil, the omnipotent Devil's Throat spans the 150-meter (492-foot) width of the Iguazú River and it is the deafening roar of its waters that you'll hear ever-increasing as you make your way through the park. The force of its waters is so great that you may even feel its vibrations as you walk along

*** Tip**

A truly exciting way to see the falls is to rent a canoe at Puerto Canoas on the Argentine side of the falls and paddle along the Iguazú Superior to the crest of the Garganta del Diablo.

Itaipú

Another must-see is the **Itaipú Dam** 20 miles north of the falls on the Paraná River between Brazil and Paraguay. As high as a 62-story building and nearly five miles long, Itaipú is

the world's largest hydroelectric dam. The hydroelectric plant has 18 turbo generators that supply 75 million kilowatts of electricity an hour. Amazingly, just one-third of one generator would fulfill all of Paraguay's electric needs! The dam's 390-meter-wide (1,280 feet) spillway can discharge over 62,000 cubic meters or eight trillion gallons of water per second. The reservoir created by the dam holds over 29 trillion liters of water.

Construction of Itaipú was a joint undertaking by Brazil and Paraguay as the result of a treaty signed by the two nations in 1973. Brazil financed most of the $25 billion required for its construction, and as many as 40,000 workers were employed during peak periods. A company town was established nearby which could accommodate 9,000 residents.

There is a visitor's center at the dam. Four tours are given daily, Monday through Saturday, each preceded by a short film. Inquire at your hotel regarding transportation to Itaipú. You may want to consider hiring a driver and requesting that he also take you to the **Tres Fronteras**, the point at which the Iguazú and Paraná rivers converge. You can see Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay from here. Each country is marked by a monument in the colors of its flag on its riverbank: blue and white for Argentina; red, white and blue for Paraguay; and green and yellow for Brazil. The Iguazú runs between Brazil and Argentina, while the Paraná separates Brazil and Paraguay. This is also a good

vantage point for a view of the **Tancredo Neves Bridge** that spans the Iguazú to connect Brazil and Argentina.

There are two museums in Puerto Iguazú. The **Museo de Imágenes de la Selva** features a collection of local woodcarvings inspired by the native wildlife. You can study the flora and fauna of the region at the **Museo Regional de Ciencias Naturales.**

Iguazú After Dark

You won't find much in the way of nightlife here. There is a **casino** in the **Hotel Acaray** in Ciudad del Este, Paraguay, just across the Río Paraná from Brazil via the Ponte de Amistade (Friendship Bridge).

The concierge or receptionist at your hotel is the best source of up-to-date recommendations before you venture out.

The **Teatro Praça Foz**, Km. 726 on Highway BR-77 on the Brazilian side (☎ 73-4370), features traditional drama highlighting the folklore of Brazil Argentina and Paraguay. Shows usually begin at 10:30 pm. Many of the larger hotels on the Brazilian side have discos, including the **Salvatti**, Rua Rio Branco 67, and **Skorpius** in the Hotel Internacional. Additional nightclubs in Foz include **A Taberna**, Avenida República Argentina 500, **Wiskadão**, Rua Alma Barrosa, and **Sambalão** on Avenida J. Kubitschek.

Shop Till You Drop

Unless Iguazú is the only destination on your entire Argentine itinerary, there is really no

need to shop here, except to pick up postcards or a little souvenir. The best shop in Puerto Iguazú is **Macarman** at Avenida Brasil 370. Nor will you find great shopping in Foz do Iguaçu. However, if you're determined to bring back something from Brazil, there is a branch of **H. Stern Jewelers** in the shopping arcade of the Hotel das Cataratas. **Artesanato Três Fronteiras** on Estrada das Cataratas in Foz sells local candy, ceramics, copper pieces and other souvenirs.

Iguazú A-Z

AIRLINES: Aerolíneas Argentinas and Austral share an office at Avenida Aguirre 295 (☎ 420-237). **Varig**, the Brazilian carrier has an office in Foz do Iguaçu at Avenida Brasil 821 (☎ 74-3344).

CURRENCY EXCHANGE: You can change money at the **Banco de la Nación**, San Martín 525 in Puerto Iguazú.

POST OFFICE: The Post Office is on Avenida San Martín in Puerto Iguazú and at Avenida Getulio Vargas 72 in Foz do Iguaçu.

TELEPHONE DIAL CODE: 3757 (see page 14).

TOURIST OFFICE: The **Oficina de Turismo** is at Avenida Victoria Aguirre 311 in Puerto Iguazú.

Mar Del Plata

Mar y Sierra, Argentina's vacation coast, is the 30-mile stretch along the Atlantic between San Clemente del Tuyo and Mar del Palata. Here, tranquil beaches and often placid seas are interspersed among towering cliffs and rocky shores that are continuously beaten by crashing waves. Argentina's summer playground extends from the Atlantic coast inland, covering an area of 569 square miles of shoreline, rolling hills and pastures, lakes and lagoons. This is the General Puerrydón district of the province of Buenos Aires. Its capital is Mar del Plata, "La Perla del Atlántico" (The Pearl of the Atlantic), 250 miles south of Buenos Aires.

Prior to its development, sea lions (*lobos marinos*) inhabited much of the Atlantic coastal waters, especially the beaches south of Mar del Plata, which today are among the most exclusive of the region. The zone was known as *La Lobería* and there are even references, dating as far back as 1885, to carriage rides from the Hotel Bristol to look at the sea lions. Unfortunately, the sea lions attracted hunters as well as nature watchers and their numbers began to decline quite rapidly. Nowadays, sea lions are protected. Visitors can again observe them in their "natural environment" at the **Reserva Natural Barranca de los Lobos** or catch their show at the Mar del Plata Aquarium.

Argentina's most famous beach resort.

Mar del Plata is bustling in the summer with great restaurants and nightlife. Yet once the tourist season is over, most places close down – though a few are open weekends.

The population during the rest of the year is a mere 130,500.

Yet sea lions and beaches aren't the only draw for the four million visitors who flock to Mar del Plata from Buenos Aires and cities and towns throughout Argentina every summer (remember, it's December through March in the southern hemisphere) and on weekends too. You can watch the fishing boats set off for a day's work as the sun rises over the Atlantic, and then spend the rest of the day playing golf or tennis; fishing off one of the jetties along the shore or at a nearby lake; horseback riding in the Parque Camet; biking along the shoreline, stopping at beaches whenever the mood strikes you; or hiking in the surrounding countryside. Not surprisingly, windsurfing, kayaking, swimming, and, of course, sunbathing are also widely practiced.

If all that sounds like too much work for a vacation, never fear. Mar del Plata has a very strong creative community and offers much in the way of culture. You'll find museums, art galleries, exhibit halls and artisan fairs throughout the city, along with concerts and great theater during the summer. Afternoon tea is *de rigueur* here (dinner is not until 11 pm) and a great way to catch up on the latest trends. You can people-watch from an outdoor table on the pedestrian-only Avenida San Martín while sharing a plate of *alfajores marplatenses* (the local pastries; see page 447). Plus, after this late afternoon break you'll feel refreshed and ready for a night on the town. You can gamble the night away at Mar del Plata's renowned Casino Provincial, take in

a show, dance until dawn at the city's many discos, or spend a quiet evening at a pub or *confitería*.

*** Tip**

When it opened in 1939, Mar del Plata's Casino Provincial was the largest in the world. Though that position has since been usurped by its counterparts in Las Vegas and Atlantic City, it is still impressive.

History

In 1581, one year after founding Buenos Aires, Juan de Garay landed in what is now Mar del Plata. However, little in the way of development occured in the area until 1746 when the Jesuits founded the region's first mission, La Reducción de Nuestra Señora del Pilar, on the shores of what was then called the Laguna de las Cabrillas. They intended to convert the nomadic Indians who inhabited the region to a sedentary Catholic lifestyle, but were forced to abandon the mission in 1751 following an Indian attack. The lake was renamed Laguna de los Padres in their honor.

The current building on the Laguna de los Padres is a reproduction of the original reducción or mission. It was built in 1968 using straw and adobe, as required by tradition.

In the mid-19th century, the region began to develop economically. In 1856 Coelho de Meyrelles, representing a consortium of Portuguese businessmen, set up a factory on Avenida Luro between Avenida Santiago del Estero and Avenida Santa Fe to salt leather prior to its

shipment to Europe. He also built the iron dock on Punta Iglesias.

In 1860 Meyrelles sold a 32-league tract of land, including several *estancias* such as Laguna de los Padres, San Julian de Vivoratá and La Armoniá de Cobo to Peralta Ramos. This proved a pivotal event in the history of Mar del Plata.

Quite a visionary, Peralta Ramos recognized the region's great potential as a summer resort for families and dedicated himself to its development. The town of Mar del Plata was officially founded on February 10, 1874 by a decree signed by the Governor of the Province of Buenos Aires, Mariano Acosta.

Pedro Luro took over the salting house in 1877. His son, Dr. Pedro Olegario Luro developed the Mar del Plata harbor, officially founded in 1923 as the "Puerto de Ultramar en Mar del Plata." Today the port at Mar del Plata is Argentina's most important fishing port.

★ Did You Know?

In fact, 70% of the city's income is generated by the fishing industry.

At first, Mar del Plata was an exclusive summer resort attracting members of the high society of Buenos Aires, including rich cattle magnates and businessman, and noblemen from Europe. The inauguration of the Hotel Bristol in 1888 made it a social "must" to sum-

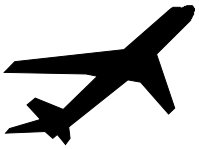
mer in Mar del Plata. In the early years of the 20th century through the 1920s and 30s the very wealthy built elegant summer homes in a style known as *pintoresquismo,* an eclectic mix of several styles, including Tudor, New England, California, Mediterranean, Basque and *Anglonormando*. Many of these homes remain.

With the rise of the middle class in the 1940s, Mar del Plata lost its aristocratic airs. The number of hotels in all price ranges grew by leaps and bounds, along with vacation complexes for middle-class families. The number of summer visitors skyrocketed. Mar del Plata was no longer the exclusive resort it once was, and Punta del Este, Uruguay replaced it as the summer playground of the Argentine jet set.

Climate

Located in a temperate zone, the average annual temperature is around 55°F. The summer months (December-February) have daytime temperatures in the 80°s. The maximum summertime temperature is 95°F. Temperatures drop down to the 40°s in July, the coldest month of the year.

Getting There

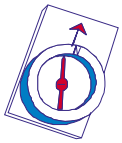


Mar del Plata is a 45-minute flight from Buenos Aires and there are several flights daily. National Routes (RN) #2 from Buenos Aires and #226 run into Mar del Plata, as does Provincial Route 11. Several bus companies cover the route from Buenos Aires to Mar del Plata.

The trip takes around 5½ hours and most buses are deluxe tourist coaches with video, bar and music. The Roca train line also makes the trip in the same amount of time as the bus.

Arrival

The small Aeroparque Camet airport is seven kilometers (4.3 miles) northwest of center city. There is a hotel reservation service in the airport, as well as car rental agencies and souvenir stands. A *remis* or taxi into Mar del Plata should cost around $10, and fares to the individual hotels are posted at the taxi stand. Both the train and bus stations are located in town.



Orientation

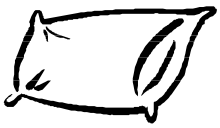
The commercial center of Mar del Plata is not very large and can easily be explored on foot. The focal point of the downtown area is **La Rambla**, the huge beachfront plaza dominated by the city's largest hotel, the **Provincial**, and the largest entertainment complex, the **Casino Provincial**. The pedestrian promenade, **Avenida San Martín**, home of some of the city's finest shops and cafés, runs into the Rambla. A few blocks north of San Martín and parallel to it is **Avenida Constitución**, where you'll find much of our recommended nightlife.

You may want to take a cab here in the evenings.

The **Bulevar Marítimo** runs along the beach and is officially known as **Avenida Peralta Ramos** while it crosses much of the city, then changes its name to Avenida M. de Hoz after passing the port not far from the southern bor-

der of the downtown area. The city's newest five-star hotels are located in this area. Known as **Playa Grande**, it has just recently been developed and is a lovely part of the city. Other major avenues include **Avenida Luro** and **Avenida Colón**, which run parallel to San Martín, and **Avenida Independencia** which runs north to south.

Best Places to Stay in Mar del Plata



You'll find no shortage of hotels in Mar del Plata, ranging from five stars down to two stars. We've selected what we consider the city's finest four- and five-star hotels.

Alive Price Scale

Deluxe: . . $200+
Expensive: . $120+
Moderate: $60-120
Inexpensive: $35-60
Budget: under $35

SHERATON MAR DEL PLATA HOTEL ☆☆☆☆☆
Avenida Alem 4221
☎ *223-499-9000 (or toll-free 0800-888-3535)*
Toll-free in the US 800-325-3535
Fax 223-499-9009
163 rooms, 32 suites
Deluxe

In addition to the exceptional service and comfort that Sheraton hotels worldwide are known for, the brand new Sheraton Mar del Plata offers its guests one of the finest views in the city. Located across from the Mar del Plata Golf Club, the Sheraton overlooks the golf course, Playa Grande, the port, and beyond to the open sea. Though located outside the center of town, it is not so far away as to be inaccessible. It is within walking distance of the port and Playa

The Sheraton and the Costa Galana are Mar del Plata's first five-star hotels.

Grande, both of which feature fine restaurants and shops, and other noteworthy attractions, including the sea lion reserve. The concierge will gladly make arrangements for tennis, golf or a fishing expedition. If you want to be pampered, make reservations for an afternoon at the hotel spa. Public areas and rooms are tastefully furnished and feature all the modern amenities standard to a five-star hotel. Two restaurants, a piano bar, lobby lounge, business center and convention facilities which can accommodate up to 4,300 persons, and a large outdoor pool round out the facilities.

COSTA GALANA ☆☆☆☆☆
Blvd. Marítimo P. Ramos 5725 (Playa Grande)
☎ *223-486-0000*
Fax 223-486-2020
E-mail reservas@hotelcostagalana.com.ar
Deluxe

The Costa Galana is ideally located on Playa Grande within walking distance of waterfront attractions. It features all the amenities of a top-notch five-star hotel.

HOTEL PRIMACY Aparthotel ☆☆☆☆
Santa Fe 2464, corner of Gascón
☎ *223-491-3600*
Fax 223-491-3205
59 apartments
Pool, exercise room
Expensive

If we were asked to recommend just one four-star hotel in Mar del Plata, we would not hesitate to name the Primacy. This 10-story

aparthotel features tastefully furnished suites with kitchenette for up to six people. All suites have television, piped-in music, individually controlled heat and air conditioning, and a safe. The hotel has a cafeteria and restaurant, and offers room service. Baby sitters can be arranged as well. Just a few blocks from the center of town, it is quieter than many of the more centrally located hotels.

TORRES DE MANANTIALES
Aparthotel ☆☆☆☆
Alberti 445
☎/fax 223-486-1999
145 apartments
Pool, gym, exercise classes, tennis court
Breakfast included
Expensive (more expensive on the weekends)

This 28-story aparthotel with one- , two- , and three-bedroom suites seems to cater especially to vacationing families. There are special activities in the gym and pool nearly every day. Parents can head up to the 28th-floor Las Nubes bar in the evening for drinks and soft music in the evenings while kids are at the more raucous disco gym (over 18 not allowed unless accompanied by children). The hotel also has a game room for both young and old and offers closed circuit video movies (requests are welcome). With advance notice, baby sitting is available in the evenings. Most suites have balconies. There are some two- and three-bedroom duplexes.

GRAN HOTEL PROVINCIAL ☆☆☆☆
Bulevard Marítimo 2502
(Las Ramblas)
☎ *223-491-5949*
Fax 223-491-5894
1,100 rooms
Tennis courts, beach, swimming pool,
weight room, sauna
Expensive

Size alone makes this hotel one that you've got to see to believe. Built by Perón in 1946, its overwhelming presence on the Bulevard Marítimo brings back memories of Argentina's glory days. If we had to use just one word to describe all the facilities here, "huge" would have to be it. The lobby, decorated with enormous murals, is huge. The restaurant is huge. The hotel beach, with its never-ending rows of umbrellas and chairs, is huge. The swimming pool is huge. The hotel's many banquet halls and convention rooms are huge. If you're looking for intimate surroundings, you won't find them here. It can literally take you 20 minutes to walk from your room to the hotel beach.

GRAN HOTEL SASSO ☆☆☆☆
Av. Martínez de Hoz 3545
☎ *223-484-0031*
Fax 223-484-2505
Casino, swimming pool, beach

The casino is open only during high season.

A lovely beachfront location on Punta Mogotes is one of the best reasons for staying at the Sasso. The casino is another, if you're a gambler. Otherwise, this is a fairly standard four star. All rooms are air conditioned.

GRAN HOTEL IRUÑA ☆☆☆☆
Av. Juan B. Alberdi 2250/70
☎ *223-491-1060 (in Buenos Aires call 4393-5504)*
(Toll-free reservations 0800-333-0325)
Fax 223-491-1183
110 rooms/5 floors
Expensive

Elegance is a high priority at the Gran Hotel Iruña, to the extent that guests may forget they are at the beach. Perhaps that is why this is a popular choice among convention planners and business people. The Iruña offers a wide range of business services, including simultaneous translation, typing and shorthand, along with conference facilities. Decor, rooms included, is traditional and on the formal side. Rooms have either an ocean or city view; if you have a preference, make it known when reserving.

Only common areas of the Iruña and Presidente Hotels are air conditioned.

HOTEL PRESIDENTE ☆☆☆☆
Corrientes 1516
☎ *223-491-0236 (in Buenos Aires 4393-5504)*
(Toll-free reservations 0800-666-7315)
Fax 223-491-1183-8537
50 rooms/8 floors
Expensive

The Presidente is smaller and less formal than its sister hotel, the Iruña. Yet it does offer the same business services and the same first class attention.

GRAN HOTEL HERMITAGE ☆☆☆☆
Bulevard Marítimo 2657
☎ *223-451-9081*
Fax 223-451-9634
200 rooms/5 floors
Expensive

A block away and across the Bulevard from the Hotel Provincial, the Hermitage is much smaller. If you want to stay in the thick of the action and are a real night owl, this may be a good choice. Since there is no air conditioning, you will probably opt to keep your windows open at night, letting in both the breeze and street noises. There is a small casino which is open weekends during the winter months and every day during high season.

Be prepared to pay more for a room with an ocean view.

GRAN HOTEL DORA ☆☆☆☆
Calle Buenos Aires 1841
☎ *223-491-0033*
Fax 223-491-0772
113 rooms/6 floors
Moderate

Consistent with her sister hotels in Córdoba and Buenos Aires, the Hotel Dora offers comfortable accommodations and excellent service at a reasonable price. The location is also hard to beat, just steps from the casino and the beach.

ESTANCIA SANTA ISABEL ☆☆☆☆
Ruta Provincial 11
☎ *421-000*
10 rooms
Swimming pool, access to beach, horseback riding, hiking
Expensive

If you're torn between staying at an *estancia* or going to the beach, the Estancia Santa Isabel is the perfect solution. Definitely a very special place, this fully modernized yet elegantly colonial manor is surrounded by gardens and offers plenty of trails for solitary rambles or horseback riding. You can lounge beside the pool or head to the beach, where there is a fine seaside spa as well as beach chairs and awnings. For nightlife, Mar del Plata is just a drive away, but if it's quieter times you're after, you're in the perfect place.

Best Places to Eat

Seafood, of course, dominates most menus. Many of the best seafood restaurants are in the **Centro Comercial del Puerto**. They range from extremely informal to a little more than casual. This does not mean that beef has lost its place here. You'll find *parrillas* throughout the city, as well as restaurants specializing in Italian, Spanish, French, German and, as of late, Middle Eastern cooking.

Alive Price Scale
(per person)
Expensive: . . $50+
Moderate: . . $25+
Inexpensive: . . $25-

Alfajores marplatenses are an absolute must. Although most would swear otherwise, these chocolate or caramel-filled pastries are what keeps vacationers coming back to Mar del Plata year after year. Afternoon tea is a ritual here and Mar del Plata probably has more *confiterías* per block than any other Argentine city and every afternoon, especially in high season, each and every one of them is crowded, with a plate of *alfajores* at the center of every table.

RESTAURANTE LA MARCA
Almafuerte 253
☎ 451-8072
International/Parrilla
Moderate

Slightly out of the way, but worth the cab ride.

Located near the La Loma cemetery, La Marca would easily fit in among the restaurants in La Recoleta in Buenos Aires. Wood dominates the simple decor of the large dining room, along with animal hides on the walls. Salads, *parrillada* and pastas are featured dishes.

RESTAURANTE SORTILEGE Y ZABALITOS
Alem 4601 and Pringles, Playa Grande
☎ 489-1155
Italian/International
Open: 12:30-3:30 pm; 8:30 pm-1 am
(closed Monday)

Sortilege y Zabalitos and Trenque Lauquen de la Costa are owned by the same people. This is our favorite of the two.

A favorite for more than a quarter of a century, this large restaurant specializes in pasta and seafood dishes. It is located in a beautiful house with high, beamed ceilings and large windows

overlooking the port. The bar attracts a crowd night after night, and the service is excellent.

TRENQUE LAUQUEN DE LA COSTA
Blvd. Marítimo and B. de Irigoyen, Playa Grande
☎ *451-4269*
Parrilla
Lunch and dinner

This is among the most popular restaurants in Mar del Plata and many consider it to be the best *parrilla* in the city. In addition to grilled meats, the extensive menu features a wide variety of seafoods, pastas, soups and salads. The *arroz con pollo* (chicken with rice) is excellent. Though the exterior of the large house on the corner of Blvd. Marítimo and B. de Irigoyan is almost Bavarian, the ambience is definitely Argentine and, as is true of both cultures, friendly and hospitable.

EL PALACIO DEL BIFE
Córdoba 1857
☎ *494-7727*
Parrilla
Lunch and dinner

El Palacio del Bife is Trenque Lauquen's greatest rival. Though beef is obviously the specialty, a tempting array of pastas and seafood dishes also grace the menu. Management will tell you that only the finest cuts of Argentine beef make it to the grill and they are probably right. Salads and appetizers are imagninative and the homemade desserts are hard to resist.

EL VIEJO POP
Av. "A" and Martínez de Hoz
(Nuevo Centro Comercial del Puerto)
☎ *480-0147*
Seafood
Lunch and dinner
Moderate

A nautical theme dominates the decor at the portside El Viejo Pop. Reminiscent of an old schooner, this fine seafood restaurant is virtually an institution and is just as popular now as it was 30 years ago. The list of celebrity guests goes on for pages and includes sports heroes such as Bjorn Borg, Pelé and Maradonna, stars of the screen and stage such as María Callas, Julie Andrews, Julio Iglesias and Rock Hudson, and international attention-getters like Ivana Trump. Even if you don't spot any celebrities when you visit, you are certain to enjoy the delicious seafood dishes El Viejo Pop is known for. Most noteworthy are the lobster and crab dishes and the *pasta con frutos del mar*.

Take careful note of the decor. Much of it is authentic and dates back to the late 19th century.

BAHIA PLAYA CHICA
Blvd. Marítimo and Alberti, Playa Chica
☎ *486-1851*
Continental
Moderate

Nestled between the side of a mountain and the bay at Playa Chica, Bahia Playa Chica enjoys one of, if not the loveliest locations in Mar del Plata. Walk down the steps to the restaurant where you'll have your choice of seating, either alongside a natural mountain wall which forms

part of the dining room or alongside the waves. Indoor and outdoor seating are available. It is hard to imagine a more romantic setting. The menu features both meat and seafood dishes.

RESTAURANT VERDI
Rejón 3656
☎ *473-4670*
Continental/French
Moderate

Verdi is one of the most elegant restaurants in Mar del Plata and would be a fine choice for a special night. Fine artwork highlights the decor while fresh seafood dominates much of the menu. The *trucha* or *salmón ahumado* (smoked trout or salmon) appetizers are were enthusiastically recommended to us and rightfully so. Salads, very fresh, are also quite good. For main courses, you won't be disappointed by the *frutos del mar* (the seafood platter) or the *supremo de pollo a la cereza* (chicken supreme with cherries). Just one block off Avenida Constitución. Dinner here is a great way to start an evening out.

LOS WAGONES
Avenida Constitución 5510
Pizza

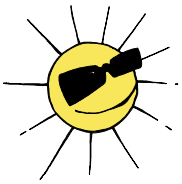
You may remember the days when they were used as diners. Well in this case, Los Wagones has put an old train car to good use as a pizzería. Definitely a fun place.

Other Options

Restaurants abound and you should have no problem in finding one to your liking. Additional suggestions include seafood at **Taberna Baska** at 12 de Octubre 3301 (☎ 480-0209); **Atalaya del Mar** at the Escollera Club de Pesca (☎ 3-1713); or **Los Vascos** at Av. Martínez de Hoz 643 (☎ 480-0200). The policy is *tenedor libre* or "all you can eat" at **Gran Parrilla** on San Martín. **Pizza Lola** and **Pumper** nearby are also quite good and reasonably priced.

Confiterías

There's virtually one *confitería* after another on the pedestrian San Martín. For a late night café, we're especially fond of the **Bolshoi Café** on the corner of Leonardo Alem and Alma Fuerte. It reminds us of the traditional coffee houses in New York's Greenwich Village. The second-floor **Sir Thomas Confitería** at the corner of Santa Fe and San Martín is also a fine choice. Sunset is the perfect time for the **Torreón del Monje**, where the views are spectacular. Or, you can stop in anytime at **Boston de la Costa**, Blvd. Marítimo 3887, where you can enjoy coffee and *alfajores* at a table overlooking the ocean. If you go to the Bosque de Peralta Ramos, be sure to stop in at **La Cabaña del Bosque.**



Dawn to Dusk

You'll find plenty of ways to occupy the daylight hours here. Of course, one of the main attractions of Mar del Plata is its beaches, 47 kilometers (29 miles) of them, often set against rocky cliffs. Most, especially those in town, have lifeguards and offer umbrella and chair rentals. Some even have changing cabanas. The busiest are also the most centrally located: **Bristol, La Perla** and **Playa Grande.** The best known beaches are those south of Cabo Corrientes, while the beaches north of the city, once fairly deserted, are becoming increasingly popular.

But there is more to life (and to a vacation) than just beaches. Following are a walking tour of the city and additional sightseeing suggestions.

Walking Tour

To give you a real feeling of being at the seashore, we'll start our walk at the **Exposición de Caracoles y Arte Nacár** (Exposition of Seashells and Mother of Pearl Art) at San Luis 1771 on the corner of San Martín. This collection of over 50,000 seashells was gathered by Señor Sisterna, an avid world traveller.

✻ Tip

We hope you walked up the pedestrian-only Avenida San Martín to get here, admiring the interesting shops, perhaps spending time at a sidewalk café.

The seashell museum is right on the **Plaza San Martín**. Christened Plaza América when it was first built in the 1930s, it was later called the Plaza Luro for Avenida Luro which bisects it, and was subsequently renamed Plaza San Martín. Interestingly, at the plaza's center is a statue of the General, not on horseback but in his older years, dressed in civilian clothes and supporting himself with a cane. It was cast in bronze by the sculptor Luis Perlotti and was donated to the city in 1956 by Roger Ballet. Benches all around make the plaza a favorite meeting place among friends and young lovers in the evenings, while others come here to feed the pigeons and the sparrows. Concerts are occasionally held in the small bandshell.

While still on the plaza, be sure to check the date on the city calendar, which keeps residents and guests up-to-date using flowers to spell out the month, date and year. Take a few minutes to visit the **Catedral de los Santos Pedro Y Cecilia** (Cathedral of Saints Peter and Cecilia), built between 1893 and 1905. Its neogothic style is reminiscent of the 12th and 13th centuries. Outstanding features include its enormous stained glass windows, central chandelier which once hung in the city's original hotel, the Bristol, and the bell tower with its five bells. The crypt below the main altar supposedly contains the remains of 1st- and 2nd-century martyrs and a small piece of Christ's Cross.

An **artisans' fair/hippie market** is held most evenings on the **Diagonal Pueyrredón**, just off the western side of the plaza.

If you continue along Pueyrredón, you'll soon come to the Los Gallegos Shopping Center.

Not far from the plaza at Yrigoyen 1627 is the **Municipalidad de General Pueyrredón** (Townhall), built in 1938. It was designed by Alejandro Bustillo to resemble a 16th-century Florentine palace. Also on Yrigoyen at 1675 is the **Teatro Colón y Club Español**, built in 1924 by the architect Angel Pascual.

Walk through the center of the Plaza San Martín and continue along Mitre one block off the plaza to 25 de Mayo, where at 2751 you'll pass the city's first public school, **Escuela N1 Pascuala Mugaburu**, which dates to 1917. Then take the diagonal Alberdi towards the beachfront. The **Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata** at 2695 houses the university's administrative offices, as well as the Humanities, Law, Science and Social Science departments. The **Monumento a los Caídos en Malvinas** (Monument to the Fallen of the Falklands Conflict) is between Córdoba and Santiago del Estero. Designed by Eduardo Lodi, it was dedicated on December 16, 1986 to honor those who perished in the Falklands War.

Continue along Alberdi until it ends at the Bulevard Marítimo Patricio Peralta Ramos and the **Monumento al Pescador** (Monument to the Fisherman), at the site of the original port where salted leather hides were once loaded

onto cargo ships. Heading right you'll shortly find yourself on **Las Ramblas**, the focal point of Mar del Plata. Presided over by two sea lions, the promenade, which runs along Bristol Beach, was rebuilt several times, most recently in the 1930s by Alejandro Bustillo. Of course, you can't miss the **Hotel Provincial y Complejo Casino Central** which, in addition to its many gaming rooms, features several auditoriums, the largest of which is the **Teatro Auditorium**. The **Ente Municipal de Turismo** (Municipal Tourist Office) is located here at Bulevar Marítimo 2267.

At this point you can continue the walk, or take a time out and visit the beach, picking up the rest of the walk later. Beaches extend in both directions from here. You may even want to catch a bus or cab, or even bike it to one of the locations outside the center of town (see below).

Plaza Colón is bordered by Avenidas Buenos Aires and Colón across from Las Ramblas. Flowers, many of them in pots, dominate the plaza, along with a children's playground. Continuing along the boulevard, there is a statue of **Patricio Peralta Ramos**, the city's founder. The **Paseo Jesús de Galíndez**, a beachfront garden walk extending from Cabo Corrientes to Las Ramblas, was originally named Cape Lobo by Sir Francis Drake who spotted a large population of sea lions there on his way to the Straits of Magellan.

As you have probably noticed, the beachfront **Torreón del Monje**, built in 1904 by Ernesto Tornquist who donated it to the city, was designed to resemble a medieval fortress. Today it hosts special exhibits and is home to *confiterías* and tea rooms. The Jesuit belltower is a fine vantage point for views of the ocean and the city.

Nearby at Avenida Colón 1189 is the **Villa Ortiz Basualdo**, built in 1909 and remodeled in 1919 by the Italian-born engineer Alula Baldassarini. It is one of the best examples of picturesque architecture and art nouveau in the city. Today it is home to the **Museo Municipal de Arte Moderno Juan Carlos Castagnino**. In addition to the city's collection of more than 450 paintings, photographs and sculptures by national and local artists and a salon dedicated to the painter for which it is named, the museum also contains the home's original furnishings, which were imported from Belgium by the Ortiz Basualdo family. A few blocks from the Villa, the 48-meter-high (157-foot) **Torre Tanque**, at Falucho 993, supplies the city's drinking water and great views of the coast.

One block from Viamonte is Almirante Brown, where at 1074 stands the **Capilla Stella Maris**. This simple chapel is home to a beautiful neoclassic image of the Virgin Mary. You are now at the border of **Los Troncos**, Mar del Plata's most traditional residential district and home to the city's finest examples of pictur-

esque architecture. It is named for the **Casa de los Troncos** at Calle Urquiza 3454, between Rodríguez Peña and Primera Junta, which was built in 1938 by Cornejo Saravia, an affluent businessman from Salta. This house was constructed using trunks of quebracho and lapacho wood transported via railroad from Salta, and it is the epitome of colorful architecture. Other noteworthy examples include the **Château Frontenac** at Almirante 2010, which was built in 1905 and remodeled in 1925 under the direction of Alejandro Bustillo. A replica of its namesake in Quebec, it is currently a hotel. The **Villa Normandy**, Viamonte 2216, was designed by Gastón Mallet in 1920 and is now home to the Italian Consulate. Equally fine are the **Villa Blaquier** (1905) at Alvear 2138; the **Villa Unzué de Cobo** (1910) at Bolívar 1159; **Saint Michael** (1930) at Mendoza 2047, which was designed by Alula Baldassarini; the **Villa Unzué de Casares** (1920) at Olavarría 2154; and the **Villa Perés** (1930) at Alvear 2390.

Continue heading away from the beach on Avenida Colón or Alberdi (five blocks south of Colón) and make a left onto Las Heras. Follow Las Heras until Matheu and turn right. At 1851 is the Belle Epoque-style **Centro Cultural Victoria O'Campo Villa Victoria**, one of the first homes of its kind in this upper class neighborhood known as **Divino Rostro**. This prefabricated house was imported from England by the great aunt of the writer Victoria O'Campo in the first years of the 20th century.

Many important figures from the world of arts and letters, including Jorge Luis Borges, Igor Stravinsky, Waldo Frank and Gabriela Mistral, spent time here. Upon her death, Victoria O'Campo donated the building to the city. Today, as the city's cultural center, it is a frequent host of music festivals, art exhibits, dances and classes.

History aficionados may want to stop at the **Museo Archivo Histórico Municipal Villa Emilio Mitre** at Calle Lamadrid 3870. This small museum traces the history of Mar del Plata and the General Pueyrredón district with over 5,000 photos, clippings and documents. It also houses a library of books by local authors.

Follow Lamadrid to Formosa, then Las Heras and finally Alma Fuerte. The **Capilla Divino Rostro**, the chapel for which this neighborhood is named, was built in 1937 by a wealthy resident, Angiolina Astengo de Mitre, in memory of her husband Emilio Mitre. The main alter was brought from Peru and features a replica of the face of Christ from the shroud of La Veronica in Turin, Italy. Noteworthy homes here include the **Villa Santa Paula** (1909) at Garay; the **Villa Alula Baldasarrini** (1905) at Sarmiento 2508; and the **Villa Mayón** (1905) at Almirante Brown 1154.

Walk down to the port on Avenida Juan B. Justo.

★ Did You Know?

Most of the city's sweater shops and factories are concentrated along this street, earning it the nickname "Avenida del Pullover."

The Sheraton is located in this area.

Just before reaching the port you'll cross Calle Alem, home to many restaurants, *confiterías*, pubs and shopping arcades.

If you're interested in sea lions, visit the port in late afternoon since they are usually sunbathing along the piers at this time. While there is always a lot of activity here, other peak times include early morning when the fishing boats are just going out or noon, when they return. The **Centro Comercial del Puerto** features many fine restaurants and cafés, as well as shops selling canned and fresh seafood. A few favorite restaurants include **La Caracol**, **El Viejo Pop** and **Santa Rita**.

From here you can head back to the center of town along the Bulevar Marítimo or head to the beach. We always like to relax with a cold drink and watch the goings-on at the port. On your way back to the center, walk through the **Parque San Martín** in front of Playa Grande. Flowers are interspersed among the rocks here creating a beautiful garden setting. This time San Martín is once again on horseback.

Other Sights

Hardcore walkers may opt to visit some of the next sites on foot. For those less inclined to walk, many are easily biked to and we've also included bus routes. Of course, you can always "cab it."

Grota de Lourdes

This reproduction of the Grotto of Lourdes in France is built into a quarry surrounded by lots of greenery. Inside, you'll find a beautiful image of Our Lady of Lourdes, along with miniatures of Bethlehem and Jerusalem, complete with moving figures and several small waterfalls. To get here follow 12 de Octubre from the port and turn left at Magallanes or take bus #522 which runs past the port.

Laguna de los Padres & Reducción de Nuestra Señora del Pilar

Some new residential developments are interspersed among the interesting rock formations the area was first known for. With them have come cafés, restaurants and shops selling regional items. There is also a golf course. The lake is a popular place for picnics and there are several *asadores* (barbecues) here. Rowboats are also available for rent and fishing is popular. A reproduction of the Reducción de Nuestra Señora del Pilar was built here in 1968.

While here you should visit the **Museo Tradicionalista José Hernández**, which fea-

tures arms used by the Army of the Desert, antique money and riding gear.

El Faro Punta Mogotes

Following the beachfront Avenida Martínez de Hoz a few blocks further south from the Port, you'll come to Punta Mogotes and the Punta Mogotes Lighthouse. Built in 1891 and modernized in 1975, it was once one of the most modern lighthouses in South America. Also on Punta Mogotes at Avenida Hoz 5600 is the **Aquarium Mar del Plata** (open seven days a week, 9 am to 8 pm; no tickets sold after 2 pm). All the usual attractions are here, including dolphin shows, sea lions, waterskiing demonstrations, aquariums and water games. Admission is around $12 for kids and $15 for adults.

Barranca de los Lobos

Continuing south along the coastal highway #11, just under five miles outside town you'll reach the Barranca de los Lobos (Sea Lions Ravine). These 45-meter (148-foot) cliffs afford a great view of the neighboring cliffs along the coast. The beaches below are a popular spot for fishing and many also come here to explore the small coastal caves within the cliffs.

The government-run **Chapadmalad** hotel complex, which belongs to the Secretary of Tourism, is about six miles south from here. Open to the public, it has its own beaches, playgrounds, watersports facilities and a coffee

shop and restaurant. Bus routes #717 and #221 also run here.

Miramar

Founded in 1888, this lovely seaside resort is known for its wide, peaceful beaches, quiet residential streets, and beachfront hotels. Many of the older homes here resemble those in Mar del Plata. The calm atmosphere is ideal for biking and there are plenty of bike rental shops in town. Though there is not a great deal of nightlife, there is a casino here as well as a golf club.

> ★ **Did You Know?**
>
> The **Vivero Dunícolo Florentino Ameghino** at 105 meters (344 feet) above sea level, is the highest forested dune in the country.

To get to Miramar follow Route 11 south 15 miles beyond Punta Mogotes.

Bosque de Peralta Ramos

Not far from Punta Mogotes, the Bosque de Peralta Ramos was once the estate of the city's founder Pedro Peralta Ramos. Now it is an exclusive residential area of magnificent homes hidden within tree-filled gardens. Groves of eucalyptus, acacias, and cypresses afford residents here lots of privacy, while the silence is often broken by birds singing. You'll find several bike paths, playgrounds, artisan shops and

outdoor cafés. To get here, follow Route 11 south to the Diagonal Norte or take bus #526.

Parque Camet

This large recreation area has polo and rugby fields, riding stables and a ring equipped with jumps and an obstacle course, plus sports fields galore. There is a forested park with picnic areas, complete with *asadores* (barbecue spits). The park is four miles north of town on Route 11. Buses #221 and #541 run here.

Santa Clara del Mar

For great beaches continue north on Route 11 for about 30 minutes to Santa Clara del Mar. The most famous beaches are **El Arroyo, La Hermosa, El Viejo Contrabandista, La Sirena, Las Corvinas** and **La Posta del Angel**, which is home to a well-known center of Latin American handicrafts – **El Centro de Artesanías Américanas**. Several hotels and restaurants are in the area. You can take bus #221 to get here.

Mar Chiquita

Not far beyond Santa Clara, you'll reach Mar Chiquita and its 40-plus miles of beautiful beaches bordered by coastal forests. They surround an *albufera*, a large inlet or lake formed by the ocean. Fishing is very popular here, with eels, flounder, and small sharks likely to be among the day's catch. There is also a reserve

for migratory birds. Windsurfing, regular surfing, canoing and waterskiing are also popular.

Balcarce

Located in the sierra 40 miles north of Mar del Plata, Balcarce is probably best known for its famous resident, five-time world champion of auto racing, Juan Manuel Fangio. Most come here to visit the **Museo del Automovilismo**, which was donated by Fangio. In addition to displaying 10 of the driver's cars, along with numerous trophies and awards, it traces the evolution of the automobile. The **Autodromo Juan Manuel Fangio** is another popular attraction.

The natural beauty of the area is another popular reason for visiting Balcarce. Traveling Route 226 north, you'll pass scenic ranches, farms and rolling hills. The town is in an area known as the **Cinco Cerros** for the series of five hills there, including **Cerro El Triunfo**, a naturally formed amphitheater.

Other Things to Do in Mar del Plata

Harbour Cruise

The ***Anamora "Yate Fiesta"*** offers a one-hour cruise through the waters just off shore. Featured on the itinerary are Cabo Corrientes, the Club Náutico, Isla de los Lobos (an offshore island that doubles as a sea lion preserve),

Playa Grande, the Torreon del Monje and, of course, the port itself.

The cruise lasts at least an hour and costs $10 for adults and $5 for kids under 10. There is a bar and cafeteria on board as well as a small dance floor. The *Anamora* has several departures every day, including sunset cruises. For schedule information ☎ 489-0310.

Rent a Bike

Except for much of the downtown area, Mar del Plata with its parks and coastal roads is a great place to explore by bike. Bikes can be rented on the Plaza Mitre at the intersection of San Luis and Almirante Brown, and on the Plaza Pueyrredón at the intersection of Dorrego and Chacabuco. Hours are from 9 am to 12 noon and 2:30 to 7:30 pm and all day long on the weekends. Always check the condition of a bike before renting it, making sure that brakes, gears and tires are in working order.

Aquasol Water Park

Waterslides, tobaggans and pools galore make for a fun day or afternoon. A great place to take the kids, Aquasol is open all day. Two-hour, full-day and multi-day tickets are available. For information call ☎ 60-0119. It's located just north of the city on Route 2. Park buses leave from Avenida San Martín and Córdoba. You can also take bus #542.

Granja La Piedra Educational Farm

A day or afternoon visit to the Granja La Piedra is a delightful alternative to the beach crowds at Mar del Plata. Bucolic best describes the setting with its modern yet rustic main building and barns, organic orchards and herb gardens, pine trees filled with singing birds, and grazing sheep and goats. You'll learn about cheese making and organic gardening, and enjoy freshly baked *empañadas* and breads. There is also an artisan exhibit. Lunch or dinner is included in the cost of admission. For information and reservations call ☎ 464-2546. The Granja is on Route 88 not far from the Chapadmalal vacation complex. You can take buses #715 and #720 to get there.

Mar del Plata After Dark

Culturally speaking, Mar del Plata is no run of the mill beach town where summer theater means amateur summer stock performances. Quite the contrary. In a tradition which started in the 1950s and 60s, Argentina's finest stars of stage and screen (i.e., the TV screen) not only summer in Mar del Plata, they perform in first-run theater productions that often travel to other cities across the country and continent after premiering here. During one visit to Mar del Plata, Neil Simon's "Lost in Yonkers" (*Perdidos en Yonkers)* was at the Auditorium in the Casino Provinicial. Works by Eric Bogosian and Marc Camoletti were also being performed at that time. The concierge in your hotel should

be able to direct you to the most popular shows in town, or check the listings in the Summer Guides published by the *Diario La Capital* newspaper and the tourist office.

A Few of the Better Theaters

***Auditorium**, The Casino Provincial, La Rambla.*
***Alberdi**, Alberdi 2455.*
***Atlas**, corner of Luro and Corrientes.*
***Colón**, Irigoyen 1665.*
***Corrientes**, Corrientes 1766.*

Mar del Plata also has a number of cinemas. Check listings in the daily paper, ***Diario La Capital***.

Gambling

Gambling is another of Mar del Plata's traditional after-dark activities. When it first opened in 1939, the **Casino Provincial**, with its 36 roulette tables, was the largest casino in the world. That honor may very well have been usurped by its counterparts in Las Vegas, Atlantic City, and even the Native American Casinos in Connecticut and the west. But the Casino Provincial, though perhaps slightly faded, is no less grandiose and the crowd that gathers here no less pretentious than when it first opened. Amidst its several gaming rooms, which offer roulette, black jack, *punta y banca*, craps and poker, are several restaurants and a theater. There is a $5 admission fee for the casino and the minimum bet is $20. It is open

from 3:30 pm to 5 am weekends only during the winter, and 6 pm to 5 am all summer long. If the stakes are too high here, there is a smaller casino in the **Hotel Sasso**, which is open only during the summer months.

The Casino Provincial has two floors dedicated to slot machines. Admission is free and many patrons come prepared with cups full of coins. You'll find them standing intensely before the machines, cigarettes dangling from their lips.

Bingo is also quite fashionable and popular with the common folk. There are several Bingo Salons around town including the **Del Sol** at Independencia 1752; the **Marplatense** at Sarmiento 2157; and the **Puerto** at Juan B. Justo 400.

Pubs & Discos

Mar del Plata does not want for discos. Most are concentrated on Avenida Constitución. **Chocolate**, at Avenida Constitución 4471, opens its doors to 13 to 17 year olds from 7 to 11 pm and attracts the 18 to 30 crowd later on. The same policy is followed by **Sobremonte-Coyote** at Constitución 6690. **Sunset**, at Constitución 5096, and **Chaval**, at Avenida Martínez de Hoz 3725, admit singles on Friday while observing a couples-only policy on Saturdays. Tango lovers will find their niche at **A Lo de Fucci Tango**, Avenida San Martín 2301, basement level.

For a more sedate, romantic atmosphere, head to **Satchmo**, Constitución 6708. **Café Frac** at

Almafuerte 249, which is really more a pub than a café, is another fine choice if you're not in a disco mood. The **Bolshoi Café** at the corner of Leonardo Alem and Almafuerte is a delightful spot for a late night coffee.

Shop Till You Drop

Once the season has ended and the last tourist gone home, many year-round residents of Mar del Plata literally go back to their knitting. In fact, besides beaches, theater productions and casino, Mar del Plata is known for the beautiful handknit sweaters, and other woolen articles, featuring original designs in all the colors of the rainbow. You really shouldn't go home without one.

Your best buys will probably be in one of the factory shops on Avenida Juan B. Justo, commonly referred to as **La Avenida del Pullover**. Shops around the city, some with branches in Buenos Aires, include **Forlí Sport** at San Luis 1836; **Tejidos Pagliardini** at Alberti 2217; **Creaciones "Duly"** at San Martín 9604; **Kangas**, Avenida Colón 1722 and Rivadavia 2760; and **Via Diffusion**, Avenida Juan B. Justo, at 893 and 1740, plus another location at Calle 9 de Julio 951, and you can visit the factory at Gral. Savio 1285. For overall shopping, try the **Los Gallegos Shopping Center** at Rivadavia 3050.

Another must are ***alfajores marplatenses,*** delicious pastries filled with chocolate or caramel (*dulce de leche*) or, even better, filled with

caramel and covered in chocolate. You can pick up a box of these at almost any *confitería* on Avenida San Martín.

Mar Del Plata A-Z

AIRLINE OFFICES: Aerolíneas Argentinas and **Austral** share an office in the shopping arcade in the Hotel Provincial, ☎ 496-0101. **LAPA** has an office at San Martín 2648 in the Galería de las Américas Shopping Arcade, ☎ 492-2112.

AIRPORT: For flight information call ☎ 479-2787.

AUTOMOBILE CLUB: The **Automovil Club Argentino** is at Avenida Independencia 3675, ☎ 472-3059.

BUS STATION: The bus terminal is at Alberti 1602, ☎ 451-5406.

CAR RENTALS: Avis has a kiosk at the airport as well as an office at Bulevard Peralta Ramos 2451, ☎ 491-3440. **Dollar** also has a kisok in the airport, as well as an office at Córdoba 2270 (☎ 493-3461). **Hertz** is in the Hotel Sheraton at Alem 4221, ☎ 489-7000.

CURRENCY EXCHANGE: You can exchange dollars or travelers cheques for pesos at **Jonestour,** San Martín 2574 and Avenida Luro 3185 or **Noroeste Cambio**, San Martín 2534.

EMERGENCIES: In case of a medical emergency, dial 107. For the police, dial 101 or call

the Federal Police at Sarmiento 2551, ☎ 451-6425.

GOLF & TENNIS: There are several tennis clubs and golf courses in the area. Most are listed with phone numbers in the *City Guides*. The concierge at your hotel should be able to help you make arrangements. The **Mar del Plata Golf Club** is across the street from the Sheraton, ☎ 486-2323.

NEWSPAPER: Events and cultural activities are listed in ***La Capital***, Mar del Plata's daily newspaper.

PEDICURES, ETC.: After days and endless miles of sightseeing, your feet deserve some extra attention. There is a **Casa Scholl** at Córdoba 1847, ☎ 495-0755.

SUPERMARKET: Pick up all sorts of terrific picnic fixings at the *Autoservicio Inés*, Edison 498 or at **Elefante**, Avendida Juan B. Justo 2367.

TAXIS: To phone a cab, call **COOP** at ☎ 477-3333.

TELEPHONE OFFICE: To avoid high hotel surcharges on long distance phone calls, head to a *telefónica*. The **Playa Grande** office is at Avenida Juan B. Justo 2901 and the downtown office is at Avenida Luro 2554.

TELEPHONE DIAL CODE: 223 (see page 14).

TOURIST OFFICE: The Municipal Tourist Office is on La Rambla at Bulevard Marítimo

2267, ☎ 495-1777. The staff here is very helpful and will provide you with lists of recommended restaurants, hotels and night spots.

TOUR OPERATOR: Excursiones Lorentur offers various bus tours of the city and outlying communities. For information ☎ 3-0732. For a bird's eye view, make arrangements with **Aero Club Mar del Plata**. Or for a harbour tour climb aboard the ***Crucero Anamora*** at Dársena B-Muelle Guardacostas (☎ 489-0310).

TRAIN STATION: The **General Roca Norte Train Station** is at Avenida Luro 4599, ☎ 475-6076.

Ushuaia/Tierra Del Fuego

Ushuaia is a long way from home. It's even a long way from Buenos Aires – 1,500 air miles. So why are most of the planes coming here filled to capacity in the Argentine summer (November-March) and even tight in the winter? The lure is not the town itself, although it is picturesque enough. It's because Ushuaia is the perfect base for exploring the wonders of nature on the island of Tierra del Fuego and the tiny islands south of it in the Beagle Channel that are largely Chilean and uninhabited. The town is also a great get-away point for trips to Argentinean Antarctica.

Ushuaia is 600 miles north of Argentine Antarctica. At this writing, most trips to Antarctica leave from the Chilean port of Punta Arenas.

You'll want to explore stunning Tierra del Fuego National Park, cruise almost close enough to touch a 30,000-year-old glacier and visit a tiny island inhabited only by penguins. In the winter you can ski, downhill or cross country, on fresh white snow. You can do all of these things and more from Ushuaia. All are readily accessible and well-organized. Tourism is big business at the tip of the Americas, but don't expect to meet your next door neighbor – not yet anyway. If you enjoy experiencing new travel horizons, you should definitely consider a stop at Tierra del Fuego, which one of her native sons called the "Uttermost Part of the Earth."

Ushuaia is the capital of Tierra del Fuego.

Some Background

Unless your history teachers were far better than ours, you learned little about this southernmost inhabited region of the earth. So you'll be surprised at the important role this region played in world history. Ferdinand Magellan, Charles Darwin and Jemmy Button, major players here, will become part of your travel vocabulary.

Tierra del Fuego (Tee-AIR-uh del FUEY-go) is a large irregularly-shaped island off the southern tip of South America. It was part of the continent until the final Ice Age when the waters separating it from the mainland broke through, stranding several native tribes. The meandering body of water was later named the "Straits of Magellan" for the Portuguese explorer who was the first to traverse it. The strait forms Tierra del Fuego's western and northern boundaries. Magellan is also responsible for the island's name – "Land of Fire." When he sailed by in the 1520s he spied fires on the island. Lit by local Indians, these were not beacons of welcome, for in this case the natives were definitely not friendly.

The island is shared by Argentina and Chile. Chile governs the western portion of the island as well as 75% of the land. The Argentine portion, which is triangular in shape and covers approximately 8,000 square miles, abuts Chile to the west and the Beagle Channel to the south. More people (about 72,000) live in

Argentine Tierra del Fuego, with 35,000 in each of the two major towns, Ushuaia and Rio Grande. Island residents are called Fuegians (Foo-JEE-ins).

Porvenir is the only major town in Chilean Tierra del Fuego.

History

In the 2nd century A.D., Egyptian navigators sailing eastward exploring the Indian and Pacific Oceans are thought by some to have sighted Tierra del Fuego and noted it on their maps. A later map noted the western opening of a strait to the north of the island. In 1428, an Italian cartographer drew a map showing the island and the waterway which was used by two Portuguese ships in 1514. They sailed into the strait but soon retreated, not realizing that it was a through passage that connected the two oceans. Magellan persevered in 1520 and was soon followed by other European explorers, particularly British and Dutch. Driven by their search for wealth and spices, they had no desire to settle the land.

The Dutch braved the open sea route around the Cape and named it for the town they came from, Cape Hoorn.

It wasn't until 1830 when Robert Fitzroy (English) and his party anchored offshore to chart the coast and nearby islands, that Europeans encountered the island natives. Four distinct tribes lived on Tierra del Fuego but two were dominant. The Onas who lived inland survived by hunting, primarily for guanacos. They ate the meat and used the skin to cover themselves and their rude huts. The Yahgans were canoe Indians who lived along the southern channel and hunted and fished for their food. It was

likely Yahgan fires that Magellan saw and it was Yahgans who were involved with the British explorers and Anglican missionaries. The extremely primitive Yahgans were surprised to find Europeans on shore and were none too friendly. They threatened and stole many of the supplies brought ashore. Fitzroy was furious and in response he caught four Yahgans and carried them back to England. He hoped to educate them, teach them to use modern tools and to worship God, then return them to their tribes to educate others. One of the Yahgans was a young boy whom the crew named Jemmy Button since that was the price Fitzroy paid for him.

Two years later Fitzroy returned with three Yahgans (one had died) and released them near the spot where he had originally captured them. Also aboard Fitzroy's ship, *The Beagle*, was the naturalist Charles Darwin. Assigned to survey the eastern coast of South America and the southern islands, the voyage lasted five years.

★ Did You Know?

The Beagle Channel was named in honor of this voyage. Darwin developed his Theory of Evolution based in part on his findings gathered in Tierra del Fuego, although the Galapagoes Islands provided more evidence for his theory.

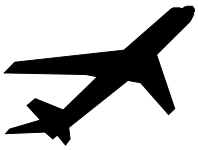
The desire to bring the word of God to the natives of Tierra del Fuego brought a group of Anglican missionaries led by Alan Gardiner. They set up camp on Picton Island in December 1850. Indians stole much of their food while storms destroyed the rest, and this first group starved to death. Later attempts were also largely unsuccessful. Ironically, one group was ambushed and killed by a mob allegedly led by Jemmy Button.

Undeterred, a group of missionaries settled on Keppel Island (Las Malvinas/The Falklands) and tried to reach out to the Yahgans. Among the group was a young man named Thomas Bridges who used his time to learn the Yahgan language. He and his wife set up a mission on the site of Ushuaia in 1869, compiled a Yahgan dictionary and raised a family whose descendants still live on Tierra del Fuego. It was Bridges' son Lucas who wrote the definitive story of early life on Tierra del Fuego, *The Uttermost Part of the Earth*.

Bridges' descendants live on Estancia Haberton, which you can visit.

A conflict between Chilean and Argentinean interests in Tierra del Fuego and the islands nearby led to a war of words and almost of bullets. The boundaries were settled in 1984. Tierra del Fuego, with its beautiful lakes, glacier-capped mountains and strangely diverse flora and fauna, is one of the last natural frontiers.

Most islands are uninhabited but Navarino Island (Chile), south of Ushuaia across the Beagle Channel, is inhabited.



Getting There

By Air

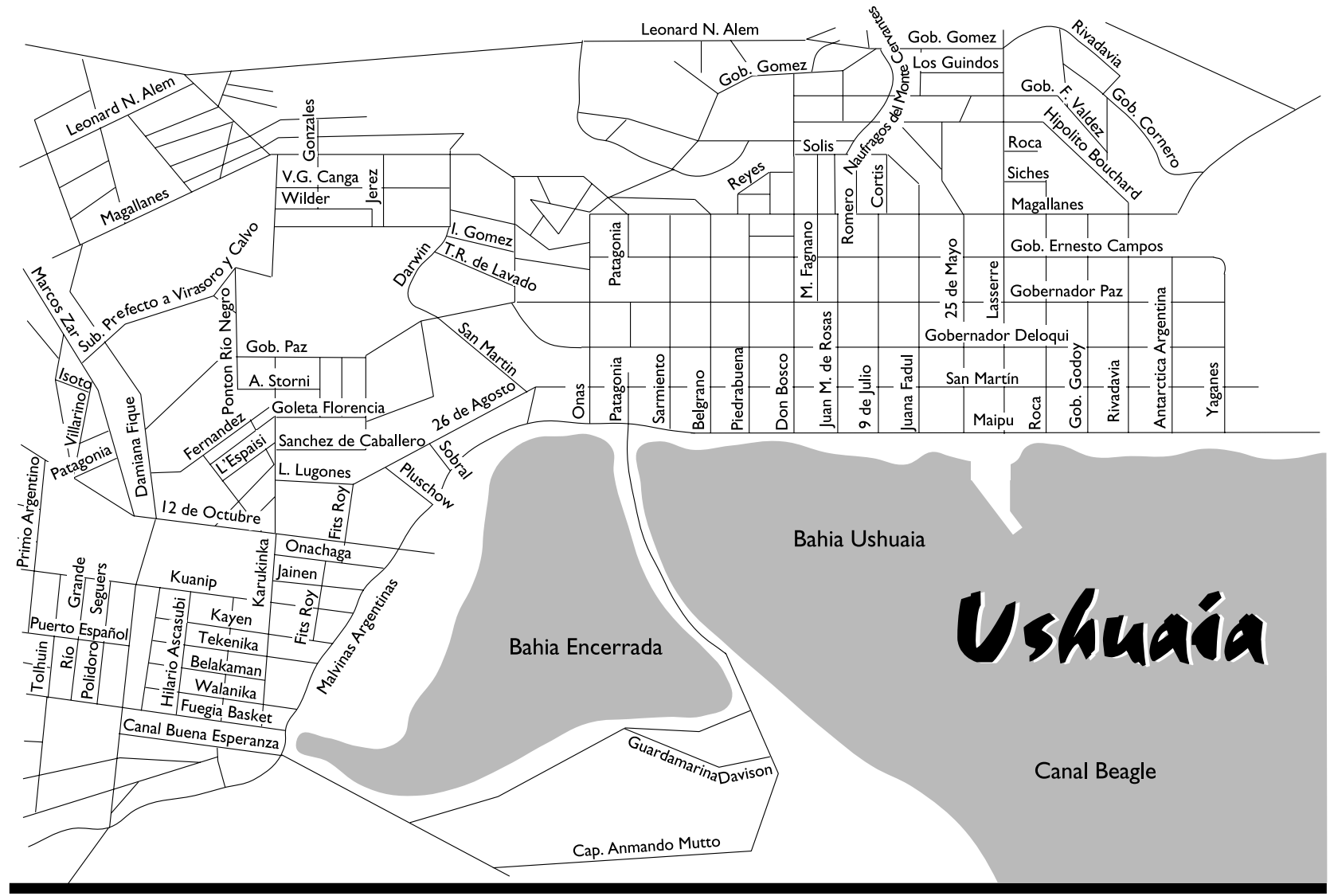
Although Ushuaia is remote, it is easily reached by air from Buenos Aires and other towns in Argentine Patagonia as well as from Punta Arenas, Chile. Ushuaia's small airport is located on a causeway across the bay from the waterfront. Until recently it had a very short runway. Combine that with the strong, erratic winds and you can see why several planes have been forced to ditch in the bay, including one carrying the governor of the state. Needless to say, funds were quickly found to lengthen the runway and landings are far less dramatic these days. A new airport is under construction.

Flight reservations should be made well in advance, especially if you plan to travel in December, January or July.

Aerolíneas Argentinas, Austral, and **LADE** have several flights into Ushuaia each day from other parts of Argentina. At this writing, Aerolíneas has two flights from Buenos Aires to Ushuaia with intermediate stops at Trelew and Rio Gallegos. Flight time is about eight hours.

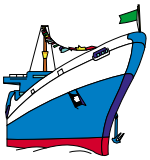
Overland/Ferry

If you have lots of time and patience, you can reach Tierra del Fuego by car or bus, and a ferry. Argentine buses from all parts of the country head south on National Route 3 (NR 3), which winds its way along the coast to Rio Gallegos at the southern tip of the mainland. The road continues into Chilean territory to Punta Delgada, which is a 30-minute ferry ride across the Magellan Strait from Tierra del


Leonard N. Alem
Gob. Gomez
Cervantes
Rivadavia
Los Guindos
Gob. F. Valdez
Gob. Cornero
Hipolito Bouchard
Roca
Siches
Magallanes
Gob. Ernesto Campos
Gobernador Paz
Gobernador Deloqui
San Martín
Maipu
Gonzales
V.G. Canga
Wilder
Jerez
Reyes
Solis
Naufragos del Monte
Romero
Cortis
I. Gomez
T.R. de Lavado
Darwin
Patagonia
M. Fagnano
25 de Mayo
Lasserre
Marcos Zar
Sub. Prefecto a Virasoro y Calvo
Ponton Rio Negro
Gob. Paz
A. Storni
San Martin
Isoto
Villarino
Patagonia
Damiana Fique
Fernandez
Goleta Florencia
26 de Agosto
L'Espaisi
Sanchez de Caballero
Sobral
L. Lugones
Pluschow
12 de Octubre
Fits Roy
Primo Argentino
Onachaga
Jainen
Kuanip
Karukinka
Grande
Seguers
Puerto Español
Kayen
Tekenika
Belakaman
Walanika
Fuegia Basket
Hilario Ascasubi
Tolhuin
Rio
Polidoro
Canal Buena Esperanza
Malvinas Argentinas
Onas
Sarmiento
Belgrano
Piedrabuena
Don Bosco
Juan M. de Rosas
9 de Julio
Juana Fadul
Gob. Godoy
Rivadavia
Antarctica Argentina
Yaganes
Bahia Ushuaia
Bahia Encerrada
Ushuaia
Canal Beagle
Guardamarina Davison
Cap. Anmando Mutto

Ushuaia

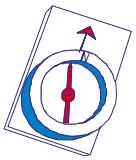
Fuego. No local buses meet this ferry. The more popular route is to make the three-hour crossing from Punta Arenas, Chile to Porvenir, the largest town in Chilean Tierra del Fuego. Porvenir is a seven-to-10-hour bus ride from Ushuaia but buses do meet this ferry. At this writing, the ferry operates twice a week.



By Cruise Ship

The *M/V Terra Australis*, a luxurious ship, makes sailing the Straits of Magellan and the Beagle Channel a fun-filled learning experience. The ship leaves from Punta Arenas, Chile each Saturday from October through March. It reaches Ushuaia on Wednesday, where it picks up additional passengers, and returns to Punta Arenas the following Friday evening. En route it anchors near stunning icy blue glaciers and carries passengers ashore on small Zodiac motor boats. Passengers climb the small mountain on Picton Island for a peek at a string of snow-topped mountains and the Beagle Channel one day and another is spent on Navarino Island. Sailing hours are spent watching informative videos or relaxing on board. This is a unique experience and a highlight of many a Patagonian adventure. Contact **Lan Chile Airlines** for more information.

November-March the Australis *visits the penguin refuge on Magdalena Island, Chile.*



Orientation

At first glance, from the airport or from a ship in the Beagle Channel, Ushuaia looks like a Swiss village. Surrounded by mountains, some

snow-capped all year round, the commercial center of town spreads out along the channel, with the bustling municipal dock at its core. Many buildings, including government offices, are constructed of wood and in chalet-style, while the higher altitude residences are more contemporary. The residential areas, built on the hillside, are connected by a series of wooden staircases.

Buildings near the waterfront are painted in pastel shades.

The name Ushuaia comes from the Yahgan language, Yahmana, and means "port at the end." Home to 30,000 Argentineans, it is the southernmost city in the world. Chile, of course, disagrees, pointing out that Puerto Williams, a Chilean settlement is on Navarino Island, which is clearly south of Ushuaia across the Beagle Channel.

To our way of thinking, however, Puerto Williams, with only 2,000 residents (most are Chilean Navy families) is too small to qualify as a city.

Ushuaia is the capital and seat of government for the Argentine province known as Territorio Nacional de la Tierra del Fuego, Antártica y las Islas del Atlántico Sur (National Territory of Tierra del Fuego, Antarctica and the Islands of the Southern Atlantic).

Avenida Maipú is the street that faces the waterfront. Facing town, the numbers rise from right to left. Several hotels are on Avenida Maipú, as is the historical museum.

Malvinas Argentinas is the continuation of Avenida Maipú as it circles the bay and leads to the airport.

Avenida San Martín, the second street from the waterfront, is Ushuaia's main street. It has

many restaurants, shops, airline offices and government buildings.

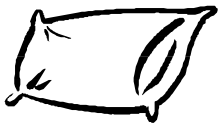
Cerro Martial is the snow-capped glacial mountain that overlooks Ushuaia. The resort hotels are located on it, as are the ski facilities.

Climate

Since Ushuaia, like most of South America, is in the southern hemisphere, seasons are opposite those of the northern hemisphere. The summer solstice falls in December when the city is bathed in daylight for 17.5 hours (December 20-23). At the winter solstice (June 20-23), daylight lasts for just seven hours. Contrary to what you may be thinking, winters here are not unbearably cold. There are two climate zones on the island. The southern area around Ushuaia gets lots of rain and clouds, while the northern area near the town of Rio Grande is drier. Temperatures rarely fall below 60°F (21°C) and can reach the low 80s (29°C) in December. The average temperature in Ushuaia is 50°F, but the wind blows constantly year-round, which makes it feel colder than it actually is. The winds are strongest in spring and summer. Most importantly, the weather changes frequently and unpredictably with wide variations in one day. Be prepared with waterproof gear and lots of "layerables" no matter when you visit.

Though far from tropical, winters are not unbearably cold. "Layerables" and waterproof gear are always a must.

Best Places to Stay in Ushuaia



Ushuaia's accommodations vary from five-star resorts on the glacial mountain that overlooks the town to charming in-town waterfront stops. For the most part, hotels are small and not many rooms are available. Things can get tight in the Argentine summer (November-March) and again in the ski season. If possible, reserve your accommodations in advance. All of our selections have rooms with heat and private baths, accept major credit cards and include breakfast in the rate.

Alive Price Scale

Deluxe: . . $200+
Expensive: . $120+
Moderate: $60-120
Inexpensive: $35-60
Budget: under $35

Rates are highest in December.

LAS HAYAS RESORT HOTEL ☆☆☆☆☆
Camino Glacial Martial, Km 3.5
☎ *2901-430-710*
In Buenos Aires ☎ *4393-4750*
E-mail lashayas@overnet.com.ar
www.lashayas.com
102 rooms
Deluxe

Las Hayas is Ushuaia's premier stop. Set on the mountainside overlooking town and the Beagle Channel, its five acres permit cross-country skiing, horseback riding and hikes through a beech forest and past fast-running creeks. Rooms are contemporary and have plush carpets. The public areas, complete with roaring fireplaces, resemble a chic ski lodge. A well-stocked gym and indoor heated pool, plus several excellent restaurants, make this a great stop.

HOTEL DEL GLACIAR ☆☆☆☆☆
Camino Glacial Martial, Km 3.5
☎ 2901-430-640
In Buenos Aires ☎ 4311-8989
Fax 2901-430-636
E-mail delglaciar@tierradelfuego.ml.org
100 rooms
Expensive

Hotel del Glaciar has recently undergone a thorough renovation, upgrading both the guest rooms and the hotel facilities. More formal than Las Hayas, it resembles a country manor house. Its 100 rooms are decorated with dark woods and muted tones. Guests enjoy cross-country skiing and hiking in the woods nearby.

HOTEL ALBATROSS ☆☆☆☆☆
Avenida Maipú 505
☎ 2901-430-003
In Buenos Aires ☎ 4311-8989
E-mail albatross@tierradelfuego.ml.org
Expensive

Under the same ownership as the Hotel Del Glaciar, the Albatross sits on the waterfront facing the port of Ushuaia, where the cruise ships dock and many of your daytrips will originate. The Albatross is nicely maintained, with modern furnishings and a friendly staff.

LAS LENGAS ☆☆☆☆
Goleta Florencia 1722
☎ 2901-423-366
E-mail laslengas@tierradelfuego.ml.org
Expensive

Slightly off the beaten track, Las Lengas is on a quiet residential street. Rooms are clean and neatly, if plainly, furnished. The front desk staff tries to be helpful, but few speak English.

HOTEL USHUAIA ☆☆☆☆
Laserre 933
☎ 2901-430-671
E-mail hushuaia@tierradelfuego.ml.org
Expensive

In the heart of the commercial center of town, an easy walk to the port and our restaurant selections, the Ushuaia is a comfortable choice. Most guests are Argentineans, who come for skiing. Rooms are good-sized and furnishings, while well-worn, are maintained.

CANAL BEAGLE ☆☆☆
Avenida Maipú 599 (at 25 de Mayo)
☎ 2901-421-117
In Buenos Aires, ☎ 4802-1845
E-mail hbeagle@tierradelfuego.ml.org
Moderate

A bustling choice, the Hotel Canal Beagle sits on the waterfront facing the channel for which it is named. Rooms are good-sized and neatly, if basically, furnished. The dining room serves all three meals and is crowded with tour groups at lunch.

Should the selections above be full, the town and its environs have several two-star stops that are acceptable. Clean but with no frills.

Hotel Cabo de Hornos, Avenida San Martín at the corner of Rosas, ☎ 2901-422-187. E-mail cabohornos@tierradelfuego.ml.org.

Hotel Tolkeyen, Calle Rio Pipo (three miles east of town), ☎ 2901-445-315. E-mail htolkeyen@tierradelfuego.ml.org.

Best Places to Eat

Clustered along Avenida San Martín, the eateries of Ushuaia are a heterogeneous bunch. Whether you feel like sampling the local *centolla* (king crab), a freshly grilled *Fuegian lamb* or a hearty bowl of chowder, you'll find a restaurant to suit your mood.

Alive Price Scale

(per person)

Expensive: . . $50+
Moderate: . . $25+
Inexpensive: . . $25-

✻ Tip

Restaurants are informal both in decor and dress code. If you dine at a restaurant in one of the resort hotels, your clothing should be casually chic.

In Ushuaia, as in most of Argentina, dinner is served late, with restaurants empty until 9 pm. Because it stays light much later in spring and summer, the streets are crowded well after midnight. Prices are a bit higher for comparable food than in other parts of Argentina since costs involved in bringing foodstuffs here get passed down. You'll need to make reservations at our top choices during high season.

Large crabs and gigantic mussels are caught in the Beagle Channel.

MOUSTACCHIO
San Martín 298 Calle Godoy
☎ *423-308*
Lunch and dinner
Closed Monday

One of the top spots in town. It has a diverse menu serving pastas as well as grilled meats.

TANTE ELVIRA
San Martín 234
☎ *421-928*

Another popular dining choice and known for its seafood, Tante Elvira is the place to sample local crab served both hot and cold.

PIZZERIA IDEAL
San Martín at General Roca
☎ *430-614*

This fine pizzeria is housed in a whitewashed building with a blue tin roof. The tables are covered with snowy white clothes and the pizzas are the best in town. They come with a variety of toppings. Ideal also serves pastas, salads and *empañadas*.

PARRILLA DON JUAN
San Martín 193, corner of Rivadavia
☎ *422-519*

A typical Argentine steakhouse complete with *gaucho*-attired waiters and a charcoal grill front and center. Courses include generously-filled *empañadas*, tomato and onion salad, garlicky sausages and, of course, grilled meats. Lamb is very popular here since it's local.

EL NUEVO CAFÉ
Roca 129

This place is crowded with locals at breakfast time and you'll find it an equally good choice for lunch and dinner. Fare runs from eggs to burgers to light platters.

TANTE SARA
San Martín (1000 block) at Don Bosco

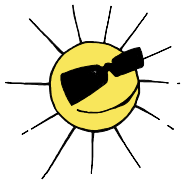
A longtime favorite, Tante Sara is best known for her hearty sandwiches and delicious ice cream. A good lunch or coffee break choice.

Other Dining Options

If you'd like to dine in sophisticated surroundings, head to Las Hayas Hotel on Cerro Martial, a five-minute drive from town. Choices here are **La Martial**, which serves seafood including shellfish locally caught, and **El Asador**, a restaurant that specializes in grilled meats such as local lamb.

A popular daytrip from Ushuaia is a visit to a local *estancia* (ranch) for a typical lunch and the best grilled lamb in Ushuaia. The restaurant in the **Hotel Tolkeyen** on the road to the National Park (about three miles from town) is top notch. You can combine the meal with your visit to the park. Expect to spend about $20 for more than you can eat.

Dawn to Dusk



Terra del Fuego National Park is covered on page 507.

If you have come to Ushuaia in the Argentine spring or summer you'll be grateful for the long days. You'll want to spend those daylight hours exploring the town, its small but fascinating waterfront museum, nearby Tierra del Fuego National Park and the islands of the Beagle Channel. You can hike or mountain bike along the park's marked trails or fish in the rivers and lakes. Catamarans whisk you to islands in the channel inhabited by penguins or to the oldest *estancia* on the island. Local tour operators offer scores of daytrips. Most are well-organized. Shop around for those that most interest you and for the best prices as well. What follows are concise descriptions of major sights near Ushuaia and some ideas for visiting and exploring each of them.

Estancia Haberton

In 1870, Thomas Bridges and his wife Mary established a mission on Tierra del Fuego on the site of present day Ushuaia. They were the first Europeans to live on the island. Bridges had come to the area as a teenager with his adoptive parents and worked with the Yahgan Indians on the Islas Malvinas (the Falkland Islands). He learned their language and gained their confidence so he was able to succeed where other missionaries had failed. In 1886 he asked the Argentinean government for and received a parcel of land on the Beagle Channel, 85 kilometers (53 miles) from Ushuaia. He lived

the last 12 years of his life as a sheep farmer here and his family has continued to live on the land ever since. The *estancia* is open to the public and guided tours are conducted in English and Spanish by Bridges' great grandson Thomas Goodall and his American-born wife Natalie. A stroll through the area offers views of nearby islands, a visit to the sheep-shearing facility and the boathouse where Despard Bridges' boat, built in 1901, is housed. Tea is served in the original farmhouse, the oldest house on the island. Pick up a copy of Lucas Bridges' book *The Uttermost Part Of The Earth* here as well as Natalie's book *Tierra Del Fuego.*

The road to Haberton is only partially paved and is a difficult drive, so it's best to visit by boat. You can combine a visit here with stops at Beagle Channel islands.

MUSEO DEL FIN DEL MUNDO
Avenida Maipú 177, corner of Rivadavia
Summer hours: Monday-Saturday 3-8 pm, Sunday 4-8 pm
Winter hours are curtailed, so check by calling ☎ 421-863.

Do buy some "End of the World" stamps as mementos of your visit and have your passport stamped here as well.

Small but worth a visit. Exhibits focus on Indian life, exploration of the area and articles from the earliest settlements. There is also a library.

Beagle Channel Island Hopping

Islands dot the Beagle Channel along the Argentine coast. Most are tiny, Chilean and uninhabited except for colonies of sea lions, penguins, cormorants and many types of birds.

Catamaran and motorboat tours leave daily from the dock area. They follow the routes of ancient sailors as they hug the coastline, pass-

ing snow-capped mountains, lagoons and tiny islands.

Half-day (2½-hour) cruises sail to **Faro Les Eclaireurs**, called the "Lighthouse at the End of the World." Many a ship has foundered here. The last went down in 1930 even after the lighthouse was built. The ship returns by sailing near **Isla de los Lobos** (Sea Lion Island) and **Isla de los Pájaros** (Island of Birds).

Full-day cruises (9 am-7 pm) follow the same route but pass the small islands and lighthouse en route to **Isla Martillo** – home to a colony of Magellan penguins. You pass quite near **Puerto Williams**, the Chilean settlement on Navarino Island. A stop at Haberton Estancia and lunch at nearby Almanza completes the trip. An option here is to return to Ushuaia by bus.

Other daytrips go to **Lapataia Bay** and the *estancia*. These trips, and a 3½-hour crossing from Ushuaia to Puerto Williams, are available only from November through March.

Local Tour Operators

There are scores of tour operators in Ushuaia. It's a buyer's market.

Rumbo Sur at San Martín 342 (☎ 421-139) is the largest agency running maritime excursions. Other reliable tour operators are **All Patagonia** (ecological tours by bicycle) at 25 de Mayo 31, Office A (☎ 424-432), and **Antartur** at San Martín 638, Local 14 (☎ 423-240).

Other Outdoor Activities

Horseback riding, fishing and cross-country treks on the Martial Glacier are also daytime possibilities. Tours are organized at Las Hayas Hotel and by the organizations listed above.

Winter Activities

If you have a sudden craving for snow on July 4th weekend head for Ushuaia, where you can ski downhill or cross country. You can also go snowmobiling, wind skiing and snow catting or explore the countryside while snuggling on a dog sled. Five ski areas are located on Glacier Martial near Ushuaia. The closest to town (about 20 minutes) is the **Andean Club Ski Slope**. Resort areas with hotel facilities include **Tierra Mayor**, 21 kilometers (13 miles) from town and **Las Cotorras**, five kilometers (three miles) farther. Both offer downhill and cross-country skiing. Equipment can be rented.

After Dark

If you still have energy to burn after a late dinner and a long day of outdoor activity, head to one of Ushuaia's discotheques. **Barny's** at Antártida Argentina 196 draws a young crowd and is packed till the early morning hours on Friday and Saturday nights. Tourists head for **El Estadio** on San Martín at 9 de Julio or **Extasis**, a block downhill at Maipú. Pubs are popular late night hangouts. **Saint Christopher Pub**, near El Estadio is crowded, particu-

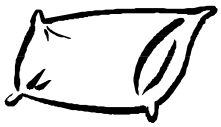
larly on winter evenings. **Cervecería Inselburg** on Leandro N. Alem 966 is the "in" spot on warm evenings.

Chilean Patagonia (Magallanes)

At this narrow tip of South America, Chile and Argentina are intertwined so it is common to visit both. Punta Arenas, a city of 130,000 people on the Straits of Magellan, is the capital of Magallanes. Much like Ushuaia, Punta Arenas is a kick-off point for exploring this region. Many cruise ships headed to Antarctica stop here as well. The major lure is **Torres del Paine National Park**, which lies 150 miles north. This huge park has several glaciers within its borders, as well as the stunning glacier-studded Paine Tower mountains. There are scores of hiking trails, *refugios*, a maze of connecting lakes for boaters and well-organized treks. Punta Arenas is the starting point for daytrips to islands in the Magellan Strait and the Beagle Channel. Unlike Ushuaia, Punta Arenas does not have ski facilities and is not a winter destination.

Magallanes (Magellan) is Chile's southernmost province.

Best Places to Stay in Chilean Patagonia



Hotel José Nogueira, Bories 959. ☎ 56-061-248-840; fax 56-061-248-832. 52 rooms. Good restaurant.

Hotel Cabo de Hornos, Plaza Muñoz Gamero 1039. ☎/fax 061-242-134. Oldest hotel in town, with over 100 rooms.

Best Places to Eat

Asturias, Lautara Navarro 998, and **Sotitos Bar**, on Bernardo O'Higgins, are the best dining spots in town. There are pizza and fast food stops as well.

Ushuaia A-Z

AIRLINE OFFICES: Aerolíneas Argentinas is at Avenida Roca 126 (☎ 421-091). **LADE** is at San Martín at 564 (☎ 421-123).

AUTOMOBILE CLUB: The **Automobil Club Argentino** is on the corner of Malvinas and Onachaga (☎ 421-121).

BACKGROUND READING: If you have some time before leaving or want a book to bring along, we recommend *The Uttermost Part of the Earth* by Lucas Bridges, *Three Men of the Beagle* by Richard Lee Marks, and *Darwin and the Beagle* by Alan Moorehead. If you prefer more contemporary impressions of the area, Bruce Chatwin's *In Patagonia* or *The Patagonian Express* by Paul Theroux are both excellent.

BUSES: Transporte Los Carlos at Juan Manuel de Rosas 85 (☎ 422-337) and **Transporte Techni-Austral** in the Galería del Jardín at 25 de Mayo 50 (☎ 423-396) offer service between Ushuaia and Rio Grande. Ser-

vice between Rio Grande and Porvenir is provided by **Transporte Sencoria** at the Avenida Belgrano Terminal (☎ 2964/421-339) and **Transporte Pacheco** also out of the Belgrano Terminal (☎ 0964/423-382). Service between Rio Gallegos and Buenos Aires is provided by **Transporte Don Otto**, whose office is in the Retiro Terminal in Buenos Aires (☎ 4313-2451).

Buses from Ushuaia to Porvenir make a stop in Rio Grande. The same is true on the trip for Porvenir.

CAR RENTAL: A reputable agency is **Avis Tagle** at the corner of San Martín and Belgrano (☎ 422-744).

CHILEAN CONSULATE: Is at Malvinas Argentinas 236/244 (☎ 422-177). Office hours are 9 am to 1 pm, Monday through Friday.

FERRIES: Primera Angostura (☎ 456-6121 or 456-8100) offers ferry service, for both autos and passengers, between Rio Gallegos and Tierra del Fuego (30 minutes) and Porvenir and Punta Arenas (three hours).

If you're transporting a car, it is probably a good idea to reserve ahead.

HOSPITAL: The **Ushuaia Regional Hospital** is at the intersection of Avenida Maipú and 12 de Octubre (☎ 422-950).

NATIONAL PARK OFFICE: For park information, the office is located at San Martín and Patagonia (☎ 421-315).

POLICE DEPARTMENT: Police headquarters are at the intersection of Deloqui and Laserre (☎ 421-335).

POST OFFICE: Located at Avenida San Martín and Governador Godoy. Hours are Mon-

day through Friday 9 am to 6 pm, and Saturdays from 9 am to 12 pm.

TELEPHONE DIAL CODE: 2901.

TELEPHONES (LONG DISTANCE): Long distance phone calls can be made from the telephone offices, **Telefónica Cabo de Mornos** at 25 de Mayo 112, which are open from 8 am to 2 am, and **El Locutorio del Fin del Mundo** at San Martín 957 (8 am to 12 am).

TOURIST OFFICE: For maps and brochures, and perhaps some guidance, the local tourist office is at San Martín 660 (☎ 424-550).

Outdoor Argentina

In this section we offer a potpourri of active vacation options. Skiing is first rate here and there are several world-class resort areas. Since seasons are reversed, you can plan a vacation that allows you to ski in July. The country also has 18 national parks. We have detailed seven distinctive parks. Within the parks and in the picturesque towns nearby you can climb volcanoes or glacier-studded mountains, trek, bicycle, kayak, fish, sail or hunt. You can visit a penguin rookery and hobnob with sea lions and seals. Local tour operators have organized these activities and their services have been honed over many years. Also in this section, we detail Argentina's unique *estancias*, some of which now operate as guest ranches as well as cattle and sheep ranches.

Skiing

It has only been within the last decade or so that the potential for terrific skiing offered by the Andes Mountains has been developed. Now avid North American and European skiers are joining the ever-growing number of Argentines who take to the slopes during the Argentine winter. In recent years, Argentine ski centers have even hosted competitions organized by the International Ski Federation, further attesting to the quality of skiing in the Southern Hemisphere.

While facilities vary, the ski centers we've listed offer slopes to satisfy skiers of all levels,

from beginner to expert, all in breathtaking surroundings. All offer equipment rental, instruction, and medical attention. **Las Leñas** is the most luxurious, featuring four- and five-star accommodations, fine dining and plenty of après ski activities, including tennis, swimming (in a heated indoor pool), a casino and discoteque. **Cerro Catedral**, just outside Bariloche, though smaller and not quite as luxurious, is a similar choice. **Cerro Chapelco** and the somewhat more isolated and smaller **La Hoya** are especially fine choices for beginning and intermediate downhill skiers as well as cross-country enthusiasts.

Ski packages can be arranged through travel agents in Buenos Aires. You can also contact or visit the Provincial Tourist Offices for more information.

LAS LEÑAS
Malargüe, Mendoza Province
In Buenos Aires, ☎ 312-2121
Maximum altitude: 11,319 feet
33 slopes
Alpine & Nordic
Ski season: June 15-October 15

LOS PENITENTES
Mendoza Province
Maximum altitude: 10,540 feet
21 slopes
Alpine & Nordic
Ski season: June 15-October 15

CERRO CATEDRAL
Bariloche, Río Negro
Maximum altitude: 7,590 feet
Alpine & Nordic
Ski season: June 15-September 30

CHAPELCO
San Martín de los Andes, Nequén Province
Maximum altitude: 6,528 feet
Alpine & Nordic
Ski season: June 20-September 30

LA HOYA
Esquel, Chubut Province
Maximum altitude: 6,930 feet
Alpine
Ski season: July 1-October 9

National Parks

Argentina is over 2,000 miles long. Within those 2,000 miles there is tremendous diversity – rain forests, spectacular waterfalls, glacial lakes and soaring mountains – as well as a wide variety of climatic zones. Much like the United States and Canada, Argentina started to feel concern for its natural areas around the turn of the century. In 1904 President Roca enacted legislation creating Argentina's first national park, the **Parque Nacional del Sud**. It was the first national park in all of South America.

★ Did You Know?

Most of the land for the park was donated to the Argentine government by the famed Patagonian explorer, Francisco Pascasio Moreno. When the park was officially inaugurated in 1934, it was called **Parque Nacional Nahuel Huapi.** Moreno's nickname, "Perito," was given to the glacier and national park in Southern Patagonia. "Perito" means expert.

At the same time Argentina created a National Park Service *(Servicio de Parques Nacionales),* which maintains local offices in towns throughout the country. Staffed by friendly, helpful people (but rarely English speakers), their offices have good maps and printed materials, though virtually none are in English. Within the parks themselves, the park service has *guardaparques* (park rangers), who maintain and protect the environment while helping park visitors.

Today Argentina maintains 18 national parks and nine natural reserves (some within the confines of parks). The parks protect 1% of Argentine territory. Provinces have also created provincial parks and reserves.

Argentina's parks are naturally stunning but are not nearly as developed as US parks. There are far fewer visitor facilities and organized activities are arranged in nearby towns rather than in the parks themselves. Local clubs, such

as the Club Andino for hikers, organize various activities and maintain *refugios* and campgrounds.

Your decision to visit a national park may depend on geography (most are located in Patagonia), but it may also depend on your interests. Each park has unique features. Trekking, horseback riding, river rafting, kayaking, mountaineering, birdwatching, photo safaris, hunting and sport fishing are all active vacation options which are easily arranged by local tour operators.

Argentine parks, perhaps because they have fewer visitors, are pristine.

Contact the **Argentine National Park Service** at Avenida Santa Fe 690, Buenos Aires (☎ 54-1 4311-0303). There are two books that you might find helpful as well. *South America's National Parks* (Mountaineer Books) and *Adventure Travel in Latin America* (Wilderness Press) should be available at your local bookstore. You can order them (and other publications about hiking and skiing in Latin America) from The Complete Traveller Bookstore in New York (☎ 212/685-9007).

Concise comments on our favorite parks follow:

Iguazú National Park

Iguazú National Park is the most visited national park in all of South America by foreigners. That is because the park is home to Iguazú Falls, one of the continent's best known tourist attractions. Only a tiny percentage of those visitors realize that the Falls are located

in a highly accessible rain forest which has over 2,000 species of plants, 400 species of birds and 500 species of butterflies.

Higher than Victoria and much wider than Niagara, Iguazú Falls is a memorable sight. You hear its roar and see its foggy spume long before you reach the river bank. Often a rainbow will straddle the Falls. Because most of the cataracts are on the Argentine side of the Iguazú River, the views are better from the Brazilian park, which is much larger than the Argentine one. Rent a slicker and cross under the Falls at the "Garganta del Diablo" (Devil's Throat). There are walkways on both sides of the river.

Leave your machete at home and explore the rain forest along a series of well-maintained trails. Although it is always hot and humid at the Falls, the rain forest is cool, since towering trees, some reaching well over 100 feet, form a dense green ceiling. Colorful flowers are everywhere and large ferns and shrubs create a dense lower level. Stick to the trails because some plants are armed with stinging nettles, spiky thorns and burning oils.

Toucans, trogons, parrots and hummingbirds are among the most common.

Blinds have been set up in the park for bird-watchers.

Animals are more elusive. Many are nocturnal or make their homes high in the trees. To spot them, you'll have to get up early in the morning, tread quietly and go alone or in a very small group. South America's largest jungle animal

(often over 700 pounds), the tapir makes its home here, as do the peccary (wild pig), paca (a huge rodent), howler and capuchín monkies and, most elusive of them all, the jaguar.

Take your swimsuit along – you'll appreciate a refreshing swim on a humid afternoon. And don't forget your bug spray. There are picnic facilities in the park but no camping within the grounds. Campgrounds do exist near the park entrance.

See *Best Places to Stay at Iguazú Falls*, page 418, for accommodations and dining options near the park.

Parque Nacional Lanín

Tourist facilities are available in Junín de los Andes and San Martín de los Andes. Many visitors opt to camp right in the park.

The volcano can be climbed. Contact the Club Andino in Junín de los Andes.

Fishing and trekking are the most popular pastimes enjoyed by visitors to Lanín National Park, which extends across Northern Patagonia's Lake Region in the province of Nequén.

The perpetually snow-capped, 12,000-foot-high Lanín Volcano keeps vigil over the park's 24 lakes and three nature reserves from its position on the border with Chile.

Largely undeveloped, the park is home to several endangered species, including the tiny deer known as the pudú, the gato huiña, the puma potrillero and the huemel or Andean deer. Hunting of the more common varieties of deer and jabalí (wild boar) is permitted at certain times and strictly regulated. Several different species of birds make their home in the

park, including the great white heron, Patagonian thrush, parrot, condor and a host of others.

Common to the park is the unusual and rare monkey puzzle tree, also known as the araucaria or the pehuén. Shaped like a huge umbrella, its seeds, rich in carbohydrates, were a staple of the diet of the Araucan Indians. Other native trees include the cypress, the lengua, the coihue, and the ñire.

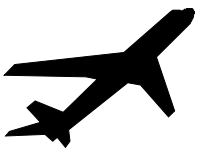
Best fishing in February and March.

Lanín is a favorite destination of sports fishermen who come to fish for Patagonian pejerrey, salmon and trout in the crystal-clear water of its glacier-fed lakes. The largest and best known is Lago Huechulafquen, which boasts the largest brown trout in the world, some as large as 30 inches in length.

Local tour operators in Junín de los Andes arrange trekking and fishing trips.

The majority of campsites within the park are located alongside the lakes; the loveliest is on the banks of Lago Quillen.

Another park highlight is the therapeutic thermal baths, *Termas Lahuen Co.* Water from hot springs is piped into a bathhouse, which is open to the public from December through April. Space here is limited and you will need to make arrangements ahead of time at the park office in San Martín de los Andes. There are campsites nearby.



Getting There

You can easily drive to Lanín from Bariloche. Just head due north. If you're coming from

Chile you would enter Argentina through the Tromen Pass (Argentine summer only). Travelers coming from Buenos Aires should fly into Chapelco Airport midway between San Martín de los Andes and Junín de los Andes. Buses connect San Martín or Junín with other towns in the area.

Nahuel Huapi National Park

From skiing in the winter to summer music festivals, trekking, mountaineering, rafting horseback riding and fishing, Nahuel Huapi offers its visitors a virtually endless array of activities. It is the oldest and largest of Argentina's national parks, extending from the continental divide to the plains of Patagonia in the provinces of Río Negro and Nequén. Within its boundaries are numerous lakes and rivers, mountains and glaciers; and well-marked hiking trails wind through the park.

Argentina's famed resort, Bariloche is at the lake's southern shore. Tourist facilities and accommodations are discussed in the chapter on Bariloche.

The park's dominant feature is the lake which shares its name, Lago Nahuel Huapi. The name means Tiger Island in the Mapuche Indian language and originally applied to the island at the lake's center, now called Isla Victoria. Nahuel Huapi, the largest of the park's six big lakes (there are countless smaller ones) extends 60 miles, covering an area of 200 square miles.

It is possible to reach Chile via the lake.

The rare, myrtle-like arrayán tree grows on Isla Victoria and is easily recognized by its pale orange bark and white flowers. It blooms in January and February and then bears fruit.

*** Did You Know?**

Tiny Los Arrayanes National Park on the Quetrihué Península within Nahuel Huapi National Park was organized to protect these trees.

Other trees on the island include the ponderosa pine, douglas fir, sequoia and the Monterey cypress. Unique to the island are the lake cormorants which, although normally saltwater birds, have adapted to freshwater and make their home on its western shore. The **Valle Encantado**, Enchanted Valley, is east of the lake on the banks of the Río Limay, or Crystal River in Mapuche, where you'll find a series of unusual lime formations with names such as Castillo (Castle), and Dedo de Díos (God's Finger).

There are camping facilities on Isla Victoria. You can make arrangements or pick up information at the Tourist Information Center in Bariloche.

The park's most popular attraction is the **Cerro Catedral**, whose 7,000-foot peak offers terrific views of Bariloche and the surrounding countryside during the summer and great skiing in winter. You can also ski or hike nearby **Cerros Otto** and **López**, although they aren't quite as high.

There is a cable car to take you to the top. Inquire at the Club Andino for trekking and mountaineering information.

El Tronador, the Thunderer, at 11,722 feet is the park's highest peak, actually three peaks in one. Ice frequently falls off the many glaciers on this extinguished volcano to create the loud rumblings that account for its name. Several different species of deer make their home in the park, including the miniature pudú and the relatively rare huemul or Andean deer, along with

mountain lions, foxes, weasels and river otters. There are fewer species of birds here than in other parks but Magellanic woodpeckers are common.

Getting There

See "Bariloche" in *Around Argentina*, page 270.

Perito Moreno National Park

Unless you're a rugged outdoor type, you should skip right over Perito Moreno National Park, Argentina's most remote park. No public transportation serves the park and it is over 100 miles from the nearest town, Gobernador Gregores, which is not exactly a metropolis. Needless to say, the park gets few visitors – so few that the park service does not station park rangers there. There are a few sheep *estancias* nearby whose owners distribute maps, hot *mate*, a bed and trekking advice.

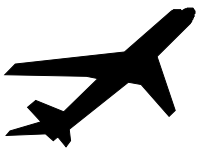
Why go? Perito Moreno is a terrific place to see the barren yet stunning landscapes that exemplify Patagonia and the park is filled with interesting fossils and Indian artifacts.

South America's Continental Divide traverses the semi-circular park. A series of snow-capped mountains run along its borders, almost surrounding the eight interconnected lakes at its center. Seven of the lakes drain into the Pacific, while the eighth empties into the Atlantic. Due to their differing depths and sizes and the stage of erosion of the limestone in the mountains

surrounding them, the lakes are a rainbow of grays, greens and blues. Yet their waters are invariably cold. Cerro San Lorenzo, at 12,160 feet the highest peak in Patagonia, is just north of the park.

Very little wildlife inhabits this barren landscape. Among the rugged animals that do are guanacos, European hares, armadillos, ibis, rheas, southern lapwings, flamingoes and condors.

Only experienced hikers, trekkers and mountain climbers should head here as it is truly isolated. The park is accessible from December through March, but don't expect warm weather even in those months. Bring plenty of supplies and heavy clothing.



Getting There

Your best bet for getting to the park is to fly to the town of Perito Moreno, 200 miles north of the park. LADE flies there. Rent a four-wheel drive and don't make the trip solo.

Glaciers National Park

Make arrangements to visit the park at Calafate.

"Los Glaciares," home to some of the most fantastic glaciers in the world, is at the southern tip of Argentina in the province of Santa Cruz. Declared a national park in 1937, it has soaring mountains, vast lakes and, of course, the glaciers themselves.

Los Glaciares covers an area of some 2,300 square miles and is actually two parks in one. If

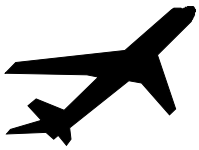
you want to see glaciers, stick to the southern portion of the park. **Lago Argentino** is its heart. At 600 square miles, it is four times as big as Lago Nahuel Huapi. It was discovered in 1873 by Francisco P. Moreno. The glaciers at the western end of the lake cut into the Andes. It is their run-off which is responsible for the lake's green or turquoise color. However, the 30-mile-long Upsala, located at the northern end, is the lake's largest glacier and sends huge blue icebergs tumbling into the lake.

The park's best known glacier is the **Glacier Moreno**. Unlike most of the world's glaciers, which are receding, Moreno is still growing. At last measure, it was three miles wide and rose 200 feet above the surface of the lake. You can reach the Glacier Moreno by road, but pay careful attention to falling ice.

Other than glaciers, Lago Argentino also offers fine fishing and even swimming on especially warm days. Birdwatchers should visit in the spring and summer when torrent ducks, eagles, condors, austral parakeets and buffnecked ibis make their home in the park.

The northern section of the park is less accessible and a visit here should be attempted only by serious hikers and climbers. Top attractions include the glacier-fed **Lago Viedma**, over 400 square miles in size, and the infamous **Mt. Fitzroy**. Climbers have lost their lives attempting to scale the latter, but their have been several successful attempts. The peaks surrounding Mt. Fitzroy are known as *torres y*

agujas, towers and needles. Not as high as Mt. Fitzroy, they are, as their name suggests, extremely treacherous. Several hiking trails wind through this section of the park.



Getting There

The best way to reach the park is to fly from Buenos Aires to Río Gallegos and catch a connecting flight to Calafete. The second leg of the journey can also be made by bus. It is a six-hour ride and a great way to see the countryside.

Valdes Península

Not a national park but rather a national reserve.

Wildlife enthusiasts will find a trip to the Valdes Peninsula especially worthwhile. Penguins, sea lions, seals, elephant seals, guanacos, whales, dolphins, rheas, maras, tinamous and a host of birds spend the summer months on this Atlantic peninsula midway between Buenos Aires and the Straits of Magellan.

✻ Tip

Accommodations and restaurants are available in Puerto Madryn, the town nearest the park. Tours can be arranged here as well. There are campsites within the Peninsula.

Weatherwise, spring and summer are the best seasons to visit. Seal and sea lion enthusiasts should plan on visiting during the breeding season in November or December when the *lobería*

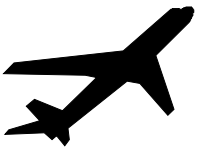
or breeding grounds at Punta Pirámides are in full swing. The best months for penguins, and hence the most popular months for visiting, are October, November, February and early March. Penguins gather in the thousands at the penguin rookeries at Cabo dos Bahías and Punto Tombo.

The Automovil Club Argentino runs a motel at Punta Pirámides.

While overzealous tourism once threatened the birdlife here, the establishment of the **Reserva Isla de los Pájaros** is slowly but surely ensuring their return. Birdwatchers are not permitted to enter this six-acre preserve just off the entrance to the park. However, the park service has set up powerful field glasses at key vantage points.

Birdwatching is best from November to February.

Getting There



The Valdes Peninsula is in Chubut Province. It is best to fly to Trelew Airport from Buenos Aires and then travel by bus to Puerto Madryn.

Tierra Del Fuego National Park

Created in 1960, the world's most southerly national park is also Argentina's only park with a seacoast. Five of the park's 300 square miles front the Beagle Channel. The southernmost accessible part of the park is only 12 miles west of Ushuaia. Most of the park is not readily accessible. Rugged, steep mountain ranges that run in parallel lines from northwest to southeast form barriers to exploring. They've also created isolated valleys and glacier lakes and rivers. Only 10 miles of paved road exist in the

park and you can cover them in half a day if you just want to look. But you'll want to do more than that.

Hiking trails have been created throughout the park and the most popular ones are self-guided. Two easy trails are: **Sendero Laguna Negra** (Black Lagoon Trail) and **Sendero de los Castores** (Beaver Trail). They lead to scenic overlooks, from which you can see the Beagle Channel and Lapataia Bay. It is at this bay that National Route 3 (NR 3) ends – the southern terminus of the PanAmerican Highway.

If you want to hike the more difficult trails that go into the mountains, join a group.

The landscape is both stunning and stark, yet has more trees than one would expect. Many are evergreens of the beech and lenga variety. Cinnamon trees with white flowers stand out. In the early part of the 20th century, local prisoners cut down trees and more are being cut down today, this time by beavers. Imported to fill some long-forgotten task, the beavers have created havoc by cutting down trees and building dams that change the waterflow. Rabbits are another imported pest and they can be seen everywhere. Red foxes, guanacos, condors and even an albatross call this park home.

While no longer in operation, the old prison can be visited.

Lago Roca, the most accessible lake in the park, has a small restaurant and campground. The *hostería* nearby had been damaged by a fire and was not open at this writing.

Visit the Yahgan village campsite which is marked by mounds of mussel shells. A reconstructed Indian village is near Rio Lapataia.

Campers can pick up supplies here.

Lago Fagnano is the park's most spectacular lake. Carved out by a glacier, it is seven miles long and surrounded by mountains. Organized bus trips do go to the lake but it is too long a trip for one day. Fagnano extends into Chilean territory.

National Park Offices

Iguazú National Park
Av. Victoria Aguirre 66
Puerto Iguazú
Provincia de Misiones
☎ *(3759) 420-722*

Lanin National Park
8300 San Martín de los Andes
Provincia de Nequen
☎ *(2972) 27233*

Nahuel Huapi National Park (and Los Arrayanes National Park)
Avenida San Martín 24
8400 San Carlos de Bariloche, Rio Negro
☎ *(2944) 423-111*

Perito Moreno National Park/Los Glaciares National Park
Lago Argentino 9405
Calafate, Provincia de Santa Cruz
☎ *(2902) 491-005*

Tierra del Fuego National Park
Avenida San Martín 395
Ushuaia, Tierra del Fuego
☎ *(2901) 421-315*

Estancias

For a truly unique experience and a different view of Argentina, visit an *estancia*, an Argentine ranch. While many continue to operate as cattle and sheep ranches, others raise thoroughbred horses, and some combine those activities with entertaining a small number of guests. Since virtually none has more than 18 rooms and some as few as three, service is always personal and extremely friendly. Accommodations range from super-luxurious to simple and rustic.

Scattered throughout Argentina, most are in breathtaking locations and offer a variety of outdoor activities as well as a glimpse of life on an *estancia*. Facilities vary, but may include swimming pools, tennis and paddleball courts, access to nearby golf courses, fishing and hunting trips, horseback riding, polo lessons, rafting, birding and photographic safaris.

Some no longer operate as estancias but rather as unusual resort hotels.

Some *estancias* are close enough to Buenos Aires so they can be visited on a daytrip. You can watch the *gauchos* in action, tour the colonial-style mansions and lunch at a typical *asado* (barbecue). You can also arrange for an overnight stay.

We'll detail a few of the country's finest *estancias,* but for more information and to make reservations, you should contact one of the three organizations listed below which represent *estancias* and unique hotels throughout Argentina.

JOSÉ DE SANTIS - TURISMO EN ESTANCIAS
Diagonal Roque Saénz Peña 615, Buenos Aires
☎ 4342-8417
Fax 4343-9568
E-mail desantis@galicia.ibm.com.ar
www.argentinae.com/desantis

COMARCAS VIAJES & TURISMO
Laprida 1380, Buenos Aires
☎ 4821-1876
Fax 4826-1130
E-mail comarcas@tournet.com.ar
www.argentina-w3.com/comarcas

ESTANCIAS DE SANTA CRUZ, PATAGONIA
Suipacha 1120, Buenos Aires
☎/fax 4325-3098
E-mail estancias@interlink.com.ar
www.sectur.gov.ar/estancs/etsc

In Buenos Aires Province

ESTANCIA LA MARTINA
Vicente Casares
11 rooms
Activities: Horseback riding, polo, tennis, paddleball, swimming and golf.

One hour from Buenos Aires by car.

This modern, colonial-style mansion was one of the first in the world to offer polo clinics. Day-trips as well as overnight stays can be arranged.

ESTANCIA LA CANDELARIA
Lobos
19 rooms
Activities: Horseback riding, polo, carriage rides, birdwatching, tennis, swimming and golf.

2½ hours from Buenos Aires by car.

Accommodations are in a magnificent mansion that looks like a medieval castle. Beautiful landscaping replaces the moat.

ESTANCIA ACELAIN
Tandil
14 rooms
Activities: Polo, horseback riding, carriage rides, tennis, paddleball, swimming, fishing, hunting, golf, windsurfing.

Has a local commuter airport. Approximately 210 miles from Buenos Aires.

Whitewashed buildings topped by red tile roofs that would look at home in Seville overlook a landscape of singular beauty in the sierras west of Mar del Plata.

ESTANCIA EL RINCON
25 de Mayo
4 rooms
Activities: Polo, horseback riding, paddleball, tennis, carriage rides, birdwatching, fishing, hiking, small game hunting, photo safaris.

Has a local commuter airport. About 220 miles from Buenos Aires.

Top-notch polo and excellent horses are the calling cards of this fine *estancia*, which also specializes in cattle breeding. You're bound to run into a *gaucho* or two here.

In Córdoba

CORRAL DE LOS COCOS
Los Reartes, Valle de Calamuchita, Córdoba Province
6 rooms
Activities: Swimming, tennis, horseback riding, fishing, trekking, sailing, windsurfing.

Rustic best describes this ranch nestled between the hills of the pampean sierra.

In Patagonia

PRASHANTI
San Martín de los Andes, Nequen Province
5 rooms
Activities: Horseback riding, birdwatching, fishing, trekking.

10 miles from town.

A contemporary family home surrounded by the majestic Andes and rivers and lakes. Very rustic and peaceful.

PUERTO LUSSICH
Lago Quillén, Nequén Province
17 rooms
Activities: Horseback riding, fishing, hunting, kayaking, rafting, windsurfing, trekking, sailing.

This traditional Patagonian *estancia* on the shores of a lake in the heart of the Andes takes "getting away from it all" quite seriously.

GÜER AIKE
Rio Gallegos, Santa Cruz Province
6 rooms
Activities: Fishing

With six miles of river running through its property, Güer Aike is a fisherman's paradise. Brown trout are the major lure.

ALTA VISTA
El Calafate, Santa Cruz Province
7 rooms
Activities: Horseback riding, photo safaris.

A contemporary *estancia* with lots of grounds to explore overlooking the Perito Moreno Glacier.

NIBEPO AIKE
El Calafate, Santa Cruz Province
4 rooms
Activities: Horseback riding, fishing, photo safaris.

Located within the Glaciers National Park, this intimate *estancia* is a working sheep farm.

Hable Español!

Days of the Week

domingo	Sunday
lunes	Monday
martes	Tuesday
miercoles	Wednesday
jueves	Thursday
viernes	Friday
sabado	Saturday

Months of the Year

enero	January
febrero	February
marzo	March
abril	April
mayo	May
junio	June
julio	July
agosto	August
septiembre	September
octubre	October
noviembre	November
diciembre	December

Numbers

uno	one
dos	two
tres	three
cuatro	four

cinco	five
seis	six
siete	seven
ocho	eight
nueve	nine
diez	ten
once	eleven
doce	twelve
trece	thirteen
catorce	fourteen
quince	fifteen
dieciséis	sixteen
diecisiete	seventeen
dieciocho	eighteen
diecinueve	nineteen
veinte	twenty
veintiuno	twenty-one
veintidos	twenty-two
treinta	thirty
cuarenta	forty
cincuenta	fifty
sesenta	sixty
setenta	seventy
ochenta	eighty
noventa	ninety
cien	one hundred
ciento uno	one hundred one
doscientos	two hundred
quinientos	five hundred
mil	one thousand
mil uno	one thousand one
dos mil	two thousand

un millón	one million
mil millones	one billion
primero	first
segundo	second
tercero	third
cuarto	fourth
quinto	fifth
sexto	sixth
séptimo	seventh
octavo	eighth
noveno	ninth
décimo	tenth
undécimo	eleventh
duodécimo	twelfth
último	last

Conversation

Como esta usted?	How are you?
Bien, gracias, y usted?	Well, thanks, and you?
Buenas dias.	Good morning.
Buenas tardes.	Good afternoon.
Buenas noches.	Good evening/night.
Hasta la vista.	See you again.
Hasta luego.	So long.
Buena suerte!	Good luck!
Adios.	Goodbye.
Mucho gusto de conocerle.	Glad to meet you.
Felicidades.	Congratulations.
Muchas felicidades.	Happy birthday.
Feliz Navidad.	Merry Christmas.
Feliz Año Nuevo.	Happy New Year.
Gracias.	Thank you.

Por favor.	Please.
De nada/con mucho gusto.	You're welcome.
Perdoneme.	Pardon me.
Como se llama esto?	What do you call this?
Lo siento.	I'm sorry.
Permitame.	Permit me.
Quisiera...	I would like...
Adelante.	Come in.
Permitame presentarle...	May I introduce...
Como se llama usted?	What is your name?
Me llamo...	My name is...
No se.	I don't know.
Tengo sed.	I am thirsty.
Tengo hambre.	I am hungry.
Soy norteamericano/a	I am an American.
Donde puedo encontrar...?	Where can I find...?
Que es esto?	What is this?
Habla usted ingles?	Do you speak English?
Hablo/entiendo un poco Español	I speak/understand a little Spanish
Hay alguien aqui que hable ingles?	Is there anyone here who speaks English?
Le entiendo.	I understand you.
No entiendo.	I don't understand.
Hable mas despacio por favor.	Please speak more slowly.
Repita por favor.	Please repeat.

Telling Time

Que hora es?	What time is it?
Son las...	It's...
... cinco.	... five o'clock.
... ocho y diez.	... ten past eight.

... seis y cuarto.	... quarter past six.
... cinco y media.	... half past five.
… siete y menos cinco.	... five of seven.
antes de ayer.	the day before yesterday.
anoche.	yesterday evening.
esta mañana.	this morning.
a mediodia.	at noon.
en la noche.	in the evening.
de noche.	at night.
a medianoche.	at midnight.
mañana en la mañana.	tomorrow morning.
mañana en la noche.	tomorrow evening.
pasado mañana.	the day after tomorrow.

Directions

En que direccion queda...?	In which direction is...?
Lleveme a... por favor.	Take me to... please.
Llevame alla... por favor.	Take me there please.
Que lugar es este?	What place is this?
Donde queda el pueblo?	Where is the town?
Cual es el mejor camino para...?	Which is the best road to...?
De vuelta a la derecha.	Turn to the right.
De vuelta a la isquierda.	Turn to the left.
Siga derecho.	Go this way.
En esta direccion.	In this direction.
A que distancia estamos de...?	How far is it to...?
Es este el camino a...?	Is this the road to...?
Es...	Is it...
... Cerca?	… near?
… lejos?	… far?

… norte?	… north?
... sur?	… south?
... este?	… east?
... oeste?	… west?
Indiqueme por favor.	Please point.
Hagame favor de decirme donde esta...	Please direct me to...
... el telephono.	... the telephone.
... el excusado.	... the bathroom.
... el correo.	... the post office.
... el banco.	... the bank.
... la comisaria.	... the police station.

Accommodations

Estoy buscando un hotel....	I am looking for a hotel that's...
... bueno.	... good.
... barato.	... cheap.
... cercano.	... nearby.
... limpio.	... clean.
Dónde hay hotel, pensión, hospedaje?	Where is a hotel, pensión, hospedaje?
Hay habitaciones libres?	Do you have available rooms?
Dónde están los baños/servicios?	Where are the bathrooms?
Quisiera un...	I would like a...
... cuarto sencillo.	... single room.
... cuarto con baño.	... room with a bath.
... cuarto doble.	... double room.
Puedo verlo?	May I see it?
Cuanto cuesta?	What's the cost?
Es demasiado caro!	It's too expensive!

Index

Accommodations: Bariloche, 274-282; Buenos Aires, 69-87; Carlos Paz, 348-349; Chilean Patagonia, 489-490; Córdoba, 314-322; Iguazú Falls, 418-422; Mar del Plata, 435-441; Mendoza, 375-379; Ushuaia, 479-482
After dark: Bariloche, 297-298; La Boca, 185; Buenos Aires, 211-232; Córdoba, 356-359; Iguazú Falls, 427; Mar del Plata, 462-465; Mendoza, 405-407; Ushuaia, 488-489
Aquarium, Mar del Plata, 457
Argentina: climate, 9-10; dining, 44-48; entry requirements, 9; exchange rate in, 11-13; getting to, 3-5; history, 16-31; language, 15-16, 515-516; map, 6; population, 31-33; religion, 44; telephone system, 14-15; tipping, 13, 91; travel within, 267-268; Visit Argentina Pass, 3
Arrayanes, Los, National Park, 293
Auto racing, 460

Balcarce, 460
Bariloche, 265, 269-303; accommodations, 274-282; after dark, 297-298; A to Z, 301-303; climate, 271; dawn to dusk, 289-297; getting there, 270-271; map, 272; orientation, 271-274; restaurants, 282-289; shopping, 298-300; sightseeing, 294-295, 296-297; winter, 269, 295-296
Barrio Norte: dawn to dusk, 148-160; map, 151; "Sud," restaurants, 117-121
Beaches, Mar del Plata, 447, 459
Beagle Channel, Tierra del Fuego, 472, 486-487
Bialet Masse, 350-351
Boca, La, 67, 175-185; after dark, 185; cantinas, 228-229; dawn to dusk, 178-185; map, 88; pizza, 185; restaurants, 129
Boxing, 194
Brazil: Iguazú Falls (Fozo do Iguaçu), 418, 421-422, 423, 424-425, 428; Itaipú Dam, 425-427
Buenos Aires, 49-264; accommodations, 69-87; after dark, 211-232; on arrival, 51-53; A-Z, 261-263; barrios, 65-67; book fairs, 191; bookstore/café, 230; cabarets, 231; city tours, 56; confiterías and cafés, 91-93; Costanera Norte, 229-230; culture, 33-44; dawn to dusk, 131-210; discos, 223-227; downtown dining, 109-117; downtown streets and landmarks, 59-65; ecological reserve, 196; estancias, 511-512; flea markets, 190-191; gay club, 227; getting around, 53-56; maps, 57, 68, 71, 151,

153, 164; men only, 231-232; museums and galleries, 199-210; orientation, 59-68; parks, 189-190; Plaza del Pilar, 106-109; pubs and cafés with live music, 220-223; restaurants, 89-130; safety in, 56, 58; shopping, 233-260; Southern Quarter, 160-189; sports, 191-196; suburban dining, 129-130; tango, 215-220; transportation to, 52-53

Calera, La, 349-350
Camino de la Punilla, 345-356
Capilla del Monte, 355-356
Carlos Paz, 347-349
Cascada los Helechos, 353
Chile: driving to, 398-405; Lake Region, 295; Patagonia (Magallanes), 489-490; Tierra del Fuego, 470, 473, 474
Córdoba, 266, 305-363; accommodations, 314-322; after dark, 356-359; A-Z, 361-363; Camino de la Punilla, 345-356; climate, 309-310; dawn to dusk, 331-345; estancia, 513; geography/topography, 308-309; getting there, 310-311; history, 305-307; map, 312-313; orientation, 311-314; other sights, 343-345; restaurants, 322-331; shopping, 360-361; walking tour, 331-343
Cosquín, 351-352
Costanera Norte, 229-230; carritos, 123-125
Cumbre, La, 353-354

Dawn to dusk: Bariloche, 289-297; La Boca, 178-185; Buenos Aires, 131-210; Córdoba, 331-345; Iguazú Falls, 424-425; Mar del Plata, 447-462; Mendoza, 384-405; Puerto Madero, 145-148; Recoleta, 149-160; San Telmo, 161-174; Ushuaia, 485-488
Dining, *see* Restaurants

Ecological reserves, 196, 429
Español, basics, 515-516
Estancias (ranches), 510-514; Buenos Aires, 511-512; Córdoba, 513; Haberton, 485-486; Patagonia, 513-514; Ushuaia, 484, 485-486

Falda, La, 352-353
Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil, 418, 421-422, 423, 424-425, 428

Gauchos, 50
Gay club, Buenos Aires, 227
Glaciers National Park, 504-506
Gobernador Gregores, 503-504

Golf, 195
Granja la Piedra educational farm, 462

Haberton Estancia, 485-486
Hable Español, 515-516
Health and safety tips, 7-9, 56, 58
History: before the Spanish, 16-19; colonial period, 19-20; constitution, 24-25; defense

against Europe, 20-21; independence, 21-24; modern, 25-31; Perón, 25-28
Horseback riding, 195
Horseracing, 193-194
Huerta Grande, 353-354
Huertas Malas, 355-356

Ice skating, 195
Iguazú Falls, 266, 415-428; accommodations, 418-422; after dark, 427; A-Z, 428; dawn to dusk, 424-425; getting to, 423-424; Itaipú Dam, 425-427; maps, 420-421; national park, 497-499; Puerto Iguazú, 416, 417-418, 427; restaurants, 422-423; shopping, 427-428
Isla Victoria, 292-293
Itaipú Dam, 425-427

Language, 15-16, 515-516
Lanín National Park, 499-501
Literature, 40-44
Lunfardo dialect, 15-16

Magallanes (Patagonia), Chile, 489-490
Maps: South America, 1; Argentina, 6; The Subway, 57; Neighborhoods of Buenos Aires, 68; Downtown, 71; La Boca, 88; Barrio Norte "Sud," 151; La Recoleta, 153; San Telmo, 164; San Carlos de Bariloche, 272; Downtown Córdoba, 312; Mendoza, 368; Iguazú, 420; Iguazú Falls, 421; Downtown Mar del Plata, 453; Ushuaia, 475
Mar Chiquita, 459-460
Mar del Plata, 266, 429-468; accommodations, 435-441; after dark, 462-465; A-Z, 466-468; beaches, 447, 459; climate, 433; dawn to dusk, 447-462; getting there, 433-434; history, 431-433; map, 453; orientation, 434-435; other sights, 456-460; other things to do, 460-462; restaurants, 441-446; sea lions, 429, 455, 457; shopping, 465-466; walking tour, 447-456
Mendoza, 266, 365-413; accommodations, 375-379; after dark, 405-407; A-Z, 411-413; climate, 373; dawn to dusk, 384-405; geography/topography, 371-372; getting there, 373-374; history, 366-367, 370-371; map, 368-369, 394; orientation, 374-375; restaurants, 379-384; shopping, 407-411; walking tour, 384-388; wine making, 393-398
Men only, Buenos Aires, 231-232
Metric system, 10
Mogotes, Los, 355
Money: credit cards, 13; exchange rate, 11-13; tipping, 13, 91
Museums, *see* Dawn to dusk
Music and dance, 36-40, 49

Nahuel Huapi National Park, 501-503

National parks, 495-509; Los Arrayanes, 293; Glaciers, 504-506; Iguazú, 497-499; Lanín, 499-501; Nahuel Huapi, 501-503; offices, 509; Perito Moreno, 503-504; Tierra del Fuego, 507-509; Valdes Peninsula, 506-507

Outdoor Argentina, 267, 493-514; estancias, 510-514; national parks, 495-509; skiing, 493-495

Packing tips, 11
Palermo barrio, 67, 185-189
Paraguay, Itaipú Dam, 425-427
Patagonia: Chile, 489-490; estancias, 513-514
Pato (duck), 193
Perito Moreno National Park, 503-504
Perón, Juan Domingo, 25-28
Polo, 192
Puerto Iguazú, 416; getting there, 417-418; museums, 427; see also Iguazú Falls
Puerto Madero: dawn to dusk, 145-148; restaurants, 94-101
Punta Arenas, Chile, 489-490
Punta Mogotes Lighthouse, 457

Quetrihue Peninsula, 292-293

Recoleta barrio, 65-66; dawn to dusk, 149-160; map, 153; restaurants, 101-106; walking tour, 158-160
Recova, La, restaurants, 121-123
Reserva Ecológica de la Costanera Sur, 196
Reserva Natural Barranca de los Lobos, 429
Restaurants, 44-48; Bariloche, 282-289; La Boca, 129; Buenos Aires, 89-130; Carlos Paz, 349; Chilean Patagonia, 490; Córdoba, 322-331; dining hours, 90-91; Iguazú Falls, 422-423; Mar del Plata, 441-446; Mendoza, 379-384; Puerto Madero, 94-101; Recoleta, 101-106; San Telmo, 125-129; smoking in, 90; tipping, 91; Ushuaia, 482-484

Safety and health, 7-9, 56, 58
San Roque, El Lago, 347-348
Santa Clara del Mar, 459
San Telmo barrio, 66; dawn to dusk, 161-174; getting there, 162; history, 162-163, 164; light dining, 168; map, 164; orientation, 165-166; restaurants, 125-129; sights, 168-174
Sea lions, 429, 455, 457
Shopping: Bariloche, 298-300; Buenos Aires, 190-191, 233-260; Córdoba, 360-361; Iguazú Falls, 427-428; Mar del Plata, 465-466; Mendoza, 407-411
Skiing, 493-495; Bariloche, 269, 296; Ushuaia, 488
Soccer (fútbol), 191-192
Spanish language, 515-516
Squash, 195
Swimming, 195-196

Tango, 37-40, 50; Buenos Aires, 215-220
Tanti, 350
Telephones, 14-15
Tennis, 194
Theater and film, 34-36, 49; Buenos Aires, 212-215
Tierra del Fuego, 266, 469-492; Beagle Channel, 472, 486-487; getting there, 474-476; history, 471-473; National Park, 507-509; *see also* Ushuaia
Tigre, 197-198
Tipping, 13, 91
Tronador, El, 502-503

Ushuaia, 266, 469-492; accommodations, 479-482; after dark, 488-489; A-Z, 490-492; climate, 478; dawn to dusk, 485-488; estancias (ranches), 484, 485-486; map, 475; orientation, 476-478; restaurants, 482-484; winter, 488; *see also* Tierra del Fuego

Valdes Peninsula, 506-507
Valle Hermoso, 353
Villa Giardino, 353-354
Visit Argentina Pass, 3

Windsurfing, 196
Wineries, Mendoza, 393-398
Women traveling solo, 58